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NEW
DIALOGUES
OF THE
DEAD.



L O N D O N :

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7





T H E
P R E F A C E.

OF all those excellent Models of Composition delivered down to us by Antiquity, there seems not one to be more faintly imitated by the Moderns than Lucian's Dialogues of the Dead ; not one where the Trials of many celebrated Wits have proved more *eminently abortive*.

A 2

Of

Of this the intelligent Reader will more easily judge, when he sees one of the most * ingenious of the Moderns professing to follow this great Master in his Dialogues of the Dead; and yet, upon his Perusal of them, he must acknowlege the Copy to be as different from the Original, as Whim and Refinement are different from Simplicity and Truth.

And if we add to this the Aukwardness, or rather the Impossibility of copying him in the Accounts of Pluto, Charon, and Cerberus, and all the amusing Mythology of antient Hell, as likewise in the Introduction of those numerous Sects of formal and hypocritical Philoso-

* Fontenelle.

phers,

P R E F A C E. v

phers, who make so considerable a Part of the Entertainment those Dialogues afford, it will then be readily perceived what Reason I had to say, that this was one of the Kinds of antient Literature in which we have fallen infinitely short.

Fontenelle indeed is sensible of the Truth of this last Observation himself, and therefore professes to imitate Lucian only in Part; and perhaps it was for the extreme Difficulty of succeeding only in Part, and exhibiting such admirable Pictures of departed Souls as the facetious Greek has left us, that another great * Name among the Moderns, in the Dialogues he has published, has not imitated him at all.

* Cambray.

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The Reader will immediately conclude from what has been already said, that I have no Design of trying my Skill in a Point where one in all Respects my Superior has failed before : and indeed I have not. Yet the very Design of a Work of this Nature has something so advantageous in itself, and has been so much neglected by English Writers, that I thought it not improper to send the following Specimen into the World.

How it comes to pass that a Work of this kind has so many Attractives to the Generality of Readers, and of consequence how extensively useful the Instructions conveyed in it may be, I shall not now inquire ; and though an impartial Critique on the
French

P R E F A C E. vii

French Authors, who have been the most successful of the Moderns in this Way of Writing, might be here more properly required; yet as that would swell this Preface to a Size very unsuitable to so small a Volume, I shall at present omit it, and may possibly take it up at some more favourable Time. Let it suffice now, in one Word to declare, that my Intention in these Dialogues is *to revere at a great Distance* the inimitable Lucian, and to steer directly between the unadorned Gravity of Cambray, and the refined Sprightliness of Fontenelle.

And if in the Execution of this Work, I can select some critical and important Parts in the Lives of some remarkable Persons; if I can make them speak in a manner suitable to

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their Character and Dignity ; if I can draw the Reader's Attention by a certain Spirit and Embellishment proper to the Narration ; and if, in the Conclusion, I can collect some useful Point of Doctrine for the Conduct of human Life ; I shall then have done all that my present Plan admits of ; and if I have not done this, I have failed in my Design, and claim no Protection from the World.

There is one Thing indeed that ought yet to be mentioned here, because Fontenelle has thought it of so great Consequence, as to pronounce him happy who can attain it : and that is a certain ingenious Simplicity and natural Pleasantry in the Expression, so proper for Dialogue Writing in general. If this
be

P R E F A C E. ix

be so, Fontenelle is to be congratulated, as having beyond all Dispute arrived at this Point of Perfection; but I am not sure that my Happiness is so complete; so that if it should be granted that there are two Things which denominate this Author an Original, Simplicity in the Turn of his Dialogue, and Subtilty in the Substance; in the one of them perhaps I could not imitate him if I would; and in the other I certainly would not imitate him if I could.

But I am not aware that this Maxim is so universally true, or rather I am inclined to think that the Observation of it on many Occasions would be a Fault, and not a Virtue.

For

x P R E F A C E.

For Instance : Mellinius was a Bigot, furious and hot, violent in his Judgment, and uncharitable in his Censures; of the same Cast with that Stoic in the *Jupiter Tragædus* of Lucian, whose very Talk was Declamation, and whose Reasoning was Invective.

Now to give such a Character as this the same Turn of Conversation in the Dialogue with his Opposer, as is given to Margaret of Austria with Otho, would be to make the fierce Bigot contend for his Religion with the same Pleasantry and Ease as the Court Lady for a Trifle *.

But it is not only on this Occasion that I have purposely deviated

* See the Dialogue between Margaret of Austria and Otho.

from

P R E F A C E. xi

from this uniform Familiarity of Style: I have not thought the Chit-chat of the French Manner more proper on many others; and I have even ventured to give to Anna Bullen and Monima a certain lofty and tragical Tone, which Indignation, mingled with Grief, seemed naturally to require.

If this should be thought an Error, I am somewhat apprehensive that, as is usual in such Cases, it is not unaccompanied with another; for as I have frequently avoided this easy and elegant Turn of Conversation, I have likewise not been over solicitous about the Chastity and Correctness which belongs to it, being long ago persuaded of the Truth of that excellent Observation in Seneca, that

Non

xii P R E F A C E.

Non est virile ornaamentum concinnitas;

or in plain English, that Elegance and Force, like contrary Qualities, for the most part destroy each other; and that great Spirit and great Accuracy have very rarely, if ever, been united in the same Author; so that if I should have the good Fortune to be allowed in this Work any considerable Portion of the one, I shall not be much concerned about any Defect in the other.

But be this as it will, my Business here is not so much to defend my Manner of composing any one of these Dialogues, as to submit them all to the Judgment of the Public, which I here do with so perfect a Deference and Resignation, that they shall take their instant Fate,
even

P R E F A C E. xiii

even in my own Opinion, from the Stamp they receive there.

This was my principal Reason for publishing this Specimen at all ; and on this Account I have given Dialogues of every kind, that I might know on which, or if on any, this Stamp of Approbation would be fixed : and I know so well the Difficulty of composing even one to come up to my own Idea of it, that I promise never to offend in the like manner again, unless, what very rarely happens, the World shall think more highly of this Work than even the Author himself.

There is another Thing about which it is necessary to caution the candid Reader ; and that is, never to impute to the Author the Sentiments

xiv P R E F A C E.

ments of any of the Speakers in the Dialogues ; who are supposed only to deliver their own particular Tenets : because, at this rate he may be reckoned an Hypocrite in the Person of Erasmus, a Suicide in the Person of Otho, and even an Atheist in the Person of Bayle ; and this Caution is still the more necessary, because, though I have been principally concerned in these Sheets, yet every Dialogue is not by the same Hand, and I have been assisted by some Friends, whose Names, if permitted, it would be an Honour to me to mention.

There seems to be little Occasion after what has been already said, to intimate to the Reader, that there is a certain imaginary Ground assumed by Christian Writers for the
Speakers

P R E F A C E. xv

Speakers in their Dialogues, who are allowed often to deliver themselves without strictly adhering either to the antient or modern Notions of the State of departed Souls, and without keeping up to that Uniformity of Character which they maintained among the Living.

I have only to add, that these Dialogues have lain by me several Years, chiefly because I did not entertain any high Idea of their Merit: but the very favourable Reception which a similar Work of the learned and ingenious Lord Lyttelton has met with, encourages me to hope for the same Indulgence from the Public.

C O N-

P. R. H. P. A. C. 2

Speakers in their Dialogues who are
allowed often to deliver themselves
without limit, addressing others to
the extent of modern notions of
the state of society, and
without keeping up to the times
any of China, or which the
times among the people.

I have only to add, that these
Dialogues have been for the last
years, chiefly inserted in the
writing and have been of the
last the way, favourable to
which is the work of the learned
and ingenious Lord Bunsen has
not with a courage to look
for the last, but the

British, and the

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DIALOGUE



NEW
DIALOGUES

OF THE

DEAD.

DIALOGUE I.

LEWIS, THE TWELFTH, and Pope JULIUS
THE SECOND.

JULIUS.



It is in vain to dispute. It was
neither in your nature nor
your power to put your threats
against me in execution. The
eldest son of the church could never ruin
the head of it; and the sanctity of my cha-
racter would always have been proof against
the attacks of the good King LEWIS.

B

LEWIS.

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LEWIS.

And yet the sanctity of your character should (one would think) have been no extraordinary security; for it was made up, as well as I can remember, of *debauchery, rage, ambition, faction and perfidy.

JULIUS.

You may add, if you please, what should be much stronger than all this to you, my peculiar hatred and detestation of the *Gallic* empire and name.

LEWIS.

Or rather that there may be nothing personal, let me add what my brother MAXIMILIAN observed, who condemning himself with you, was **most** likely to speak truth; and yet in **his** coolest moments he reflected with a kind of horror on the desperate condition of the world, without the interposition of Providence, if it was to be governed by such a drunkard as Julius, and such a poor * hunter as Maximilian.

JULIUS.

* A saying of Maximilian's.

JULIUS.

And yet I say, for all this, my holiness was always able to prevail over your wrath ; not that true and inward holiness, which the gospel recommends, and to which I had no pretensions ; but that titular and external holiness attached to my see, and which as properly belonged to the drunkard Julius, as majesty to the hunter Maximilian : this, I say, was able, at any time, to wrest the weapons out of your hands.

LEWIS.

You did not think so, when your perfidies had raised my anger to such a pitch, that I set out armed from France, with this revengeful motto, *Perdam Babylonis nomen*.

JULIUS.

Yes ; not only then, but at a much more critical time, when you had gained the battle of Ravenna ; when my affairs were in the utmost confusion, and I lay entirely at your mercy.

LEWIS.

But surely for such a one as Julius to lie at any one's mercy must be a very painful
B 2 situation,

situation, who had behaved himself so as to be the object of no one's mercy at all.

JULIUS.

No matter for that : I was sure of it from you, upon the most clear and indisputable motive, your own excellent disposition ; you remember the merciful and generous answer which you once made to a vindictive courtier, that a king of France ought never to gratify the resentments of a duke of Orleans.

LEWIS.

That answer, I hear, from the gallantry of the sentiment, and the ingeniousness of the turn, does honour to my memory even at this day.

JULIUS.

No doubt of it, as well as that amiable character you received, as father of your people : but this excellent disposition that did you honour in the world, only exposed you more effectually to my plots and contrivances ;

ances; and I made use of it as well in my prosperity to oppress you, as in my adversity to appease you.

LEWIS.

You behaved like yourself; and the conduct was worthy of the most execrable pope that ever filled the chair.

JULIUS.

But for fear this should not do, as my plots began to be seen through, I made use of a variety of tricks, and added what scarce ever yet failed to make the noblest victories prove abortive.

LEWIS.

That my victories proved abortive, I know to be true: but how came I to be so bewitched as to give up all the advantages I had gained, to my most implacable enemy?

JULIUS.

By as sure and effectual a sort of *witchery* as any in the world, the charms *in the letters* of the word HOLINESS: which,

as I told you, was inherent in the pope-
dom, and thought essential to the mitre,

LEWIS.

But I knew it was not; and found by
frequent experience, that popes were no ho-
lier than other men.

JULIUS.

That might be; and yet there would be
many times, when this knowledge would
be no security against a charm of this na-
ture: men, much less religious than you,
have, at certain seasons, been forced to act
in favour of superstition against reason; nay,
the boldest and most deliberate atheists have
not always been able to hold out against
prejudices of this sort. The Athenian Peri-
cles was certainly as free from superstition
as Lewis XII. yet he was forced in sickness
to submit to charms and amulets, which,
when well, he despised. In short, what was
said by one of your successors to Charles V.
is exactly applicable to the present case.
When that monarch sent him a declara-
tion of war, with a particular enumeration
of

of all his titles, as emperor of Germany, king of Spain, lord of the Low-Countries, Jerusalem, &c. Francis answered to each of them distinctly (to shew that one title was not inferior to many) *king of France, king of France, king of France.*— And when a temporal monarch like you would threaten a successor of St. Peter with leagues, with armies, and sedition, it may frequently be sufficient to oppose to them all, *the church, the church, the church!*

LEWIS.

This is a very pleasant application of my successor's pride ; and yet I think I shewed you on certain occasions, that you wanted all this power, and more.

JULIUS.

No. I never wanted more, but I wanted it in another shape ; if it failed in the hideous form of terror, I made it succeed in the agreeable one of beauty. In those sallies of passion, when you was not accessible on the side of superstition yourself, I found out those that were ; and by their means wrought you to my purpose : even the

B 4

wife

* wife of your bosom co-operated here with the church, and frequently undid in bed all that you had done in the field.

LEWIS.

This double witchcraft was indeed more likely to be successful.

JULIUS.

If it was not, I made it triple. The populace of a kingdom are as liable to religious impressions as women ; and I had millions of your subjects attached by this means to my see, and in an unnatural interest against their king. I had, besides, cardinals, legates, nuncios, priests, fryars, and monks, of my own : so that, upon the whole, you could scarce have any means of escaping me ; I beset you in the city, the camp, and the battle ; I chained you, as it were, down, both abroad and at home ; and I frequently made you know, by dear-bought experience, that these powers were as effectual in my hands, as an army of an hundred thousand men in yours.

LEWIS.

* Ann of Brittany, who constantly teized Lewis into peace with the pope.

LEWIS.

And yet, for all this, some people have got the better of all this holy band ; and neither this power, nor any other, could hinder one of your successors from having his capital sacked, his citadel taken, and himself made a prisoner.

JULIUS.

That might be. I do not say that this power is always proof against fury : yet you should have observed, that this * monarch was half ashamed of his victory, and was obliged to put on mourning for the captivity of the holy father, whom his own generals had subdued.

LEWIS.

That was a farce indeed : every one knew, that he inwardly rejoiced at the fall of Babylon.

JULIUS.

* Charles V. who sacked Rome, and took the pope prisoner.

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JULIUS.

So much the greater does it prove the power of Babylon to be ; he was forced to weep over his conquests, for fear even of his own subjects.

LEWIS.

But if I had done the same thing to you, I am not aware that my subjects would have mutinied ; they knew you to be as great a villain as I did.

JULIUS.

So did your wife, and yet she could not bear to see the church receive any injury : on this occasion the gravest matrons stood up for New Rome, as the greatest heroes did for Old : both of them resolved that neither the spiritual nor temporal community should receive any harm ; nay, on this occasion, one of the chastest and most virtuous of women appeared in behalf of the most profligate and abandoned of men : and caresses, resentments, endearments, reproaches, intrigues, importunities, conscience

science and tears, were all of them by turns made use of against the honour both of her husband and her country: can you have a greater instance of the force of spiritual arms?

LEWIS.

It is indeed too great for the repose of the world; and I am not sorry to hear that since my time it is less.



DIALOGUE



DIALOGUE II.

LUTHER *and* ERASMUS.

ERASMUS.

I Warrant you, you thought you had made an excellent piece of work of it, in changing the religion of your country: the æra of the reformation, no doubt, founded finely in the ears of its author.

LUTHER.

O! it sounds finely yet; no time can diminish the sense of so meritorious a work; and the reflection on it makes a principal part of my happiness, even in these lower regions.

ERASMUS.

O! envy'd happiness of folly and delusion! who but such a stupid German as you

you could ever take it into his head to think, that the reformation could be useful to Christianity, and not even in death awake from that pleasing dream?

LUTHER.

How glorious is it for me to be always teized with those whose errors I have detected? for by this opening I judge that I have some bigotted Catholic to contend with.

ERASMUS.

Why then you judge here as you did above; and it is not yet given you to see any farther than the outside of things.— Know then that I was as much a Protestant as yourself, in all things but the folly of professing myself so, and building a religion on the sandy foundation of the necessity of private judgment: or if this is not enough for your information, know that I was once at least as clear-sighted as yourself, at the time you saw the farthest; that I penetrated at least into all the cheats and delusions of the Romish church, and yet thought it necessary to live and die in the profession

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profession of that communion ; know in short, that I am Erasmus.

LUTHER.

And what is there so superior in the life and conduct of Erasmus, that it should make Luther contemptible ? As far as I can find, you wanted courage to defend your notions, and even frankness to reveal them : you could not attain yourself either to the sincerity or fortitude of a true soldier of Christ ; and for this reason seem to be angry with those that did.

ERASMUS.

Say rather, that I had neither the folly nor the wildness to endeavour to persuade the world, that the resveries of Lutheranism could ever be consistent with themselves, or end well to Christianity. The basis of the reformation was, I think, that every one was at liberty to examine the established religion, and depart from it when he thought proper.

LUTHER.

True.

ERAS-

ERASMUS.

So that as you reformed from the Catholics, the Calvinists might reform from you, and the Quakers might reform from you both: the Muggletonian might reform from the Quaker, the Methodist might reform from the Muggletonian, and the Independent might reform from you all.

LUTHER.

What's this? Independent, Methodist, Muggletonian? why I know not so much as the names of these reformers!

ERASMUS.

And had it not been for you, they would have been equally unknown to the rest of the world: but surely they are the names only of those sects, and not the probable existence of them, that are a secret to you; or, to speak in a manner more suitable to the grossness of your imagination, you could not but be apprehensive that reformation once broach'd would be drawn to the dregs.

Lu-

LUTHER.

I know of no dregs that can flow from so pure and heavenly a source; the last running must be as clear as the first.

ERASMUS.

That is to say, that if millions and millions of frantic and visionary sects were to spring from the seeds the dull Luther has sown, none of them would reflect any discredit to Christianity, or produce any inconvenience to society.

LUTHER.

I am not aware that I said so much; if I did, I have some doubts as to the truth of it.

ERASMUS.

But this is to doubt too late; and it would have become you much better to have doubted at your first setting out; for now, I can tell you, the thing is in effect come to pass; and, exclusive of infidelity, which the reformation has made confident, your Lutheranism is split into as many whimsical

cal forms of worship as those of the whole world put together.

LUTHER.

But I expected there should have been what I try'd in my own life to compass; some creeds, some articles, and systems; some church-power, some authority, and compulsion, to confine this prolific principle within proper bounds.

ERASMUS.

How! Creeds, systems, compulsion? the names of these ought to be much more strange to me, than those of Mugletonian and Independent to you; why the very idea of them is an absurdity on your plan, where every one is to think as he pleases.

LUTHER.

But though this liberty be allowed, yet surely it does not imply, that every one may disturb the common faith, and depart from it just when he thinks proper.

C

ERAS-

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ERASMUS.

No! then what right had you to do it?

LUTHER.

I? because I — I was in such — I had
so many —

ERASMUS.

Come, don't boggle any farther: the
true and only reason that can be given
why you might do it, and not another, is,
because it was a privilege that did not be-
long to any of the race of men but to Lu-
ther; there was one peculiarly happy ge-
nius, favour'd by God, and marked out by
heaven for such an important undertak-
ing.

LUTHER.

You may laugh as you please; but still
the very being of a religion supposes some
authority in its professors, to curb or sup-
press all others; and if all churches ever
had, and always must have this power, why
must mine alone be without it?

ERAS-

ERASMUS.

Because the foolish founder of it did not know what he was about, and expected a fabric of church-power without any foundation ; this has puzzled your successors so much, that we see frequently the grossest inconsistency and contradiction in all the Protestant churches ; who set out with a principle that leaves every one at liberty, and then punish them for the exertion of it, when they have done.—However, as you say, there must be some power of this sort ; and if you had forgot it in your plan, it has been amply made up by those who came after you ; and we have heard of a synod of Dort in a Protestant country, treading exactly in the same steps with the council of Trent in a Catholic one ; violence and oppression appear with the same face, though not with the same consistency, in both.

LUTHER.

Such is the nature of mankind ; in all struggles for superiority between principle and interest, it is easy to see which will get

the better. But then, if the Protestants found it useful to imitate the Catholics in part of their persecuting system, notwithstanding the absurdity of doing so, how comes it to pass that the other ill consequence of the reformation, in the numerous sects of it, continues?

ERASMUS.

For the reason you yourself have intimated; because you and your successors have imitated the Romanists but by halves; you have not had rigour enough to be thorough Catholics, nor mildness enough to be thorough Protestants: if you had been one, you would have suffered quietly an infinity of sects; if you had been the other, you would have suffered none. — At present you have manag'd the matter so, as to produce neither peace to society, nor credit to yourselves; to deserve neither the character of good Christians, nor good hypocrites; neither sound politicians as to the interests of this world, nor sincere candidates for the glory of the other. — Like men bent upon two incompatible errands, ye loiter idly between both; or rather

rather, like men not perfectly weaned from idolatry, ye fluctuate awkwardly between carnality and grace, and impiously halt between God and Baal.

LUTHER.

I protest this is downright satire.

ERASMUS.

Who can ever say so, that sees the truth of it literally and punctually fulfilled in every Protestant country under heaven?—that hears the inhabitants of them all every day haranguing on the glorious liberty of the reformation, and in the very same breath endeavouring to subvert it; bearing with a sort of seeming complacency a dangerous or heretical opinion, when at the very same time, if they were not hindered, they would cut your throat for maintaining it.

LUTHER.

Well, but is there no country where the reformation is maintained in its original purity? what if no compulsion of any kind was ever used?

ERASMUS.

Why then, as I said before, you would see an endless variety of religious fooleries, with open and bare-faced infidelity at their head: and to cut you short in your enquiries how this could be, I need only tell you, that it is actually fact in all those Protestant nations which approach nearest to your original plan.—If you doubt it, enquire of that infinity of bold or motley shades which come daily from those parts; and by these you will find, as I have done before, that they have either rent the seamless coat of their master into thousands of pieces, on the one hand, or expos'd it, on the other, as without any tincture of holiness, and of a piece with that common and political robe, which covered of old the intrigues of priests, and lying lawgivers of the Pagan world; in a word, if there be any such thing as converting truth into fiction; if there be any danger of bringing order into confusion, and bartering away a simple and uniform revelation for human refinement and invention, Luther has shown the way.

LU-

LUTHER.

I own these are some of the inconveniences which I did not see in all their force at my first setting out ; but such inconveniences must ever attend on all considerable undertakings that have not yet been tried. But how ungrateful is it in you to look only on the darker side, to forget every advantage which the reformation has introduced, and, above all, to return me no thanks for my noble stand against the powers of the inquisition, and hindering a set of spiritual villains from plundering and destroying their fellow-creatures.

ERASMUS.

There you was right ; and you should either have stopped on a sudden at this critical point, or, if you had proceeded farther, should have made your religion, like the laws of the Medes and Persians, unalterable for ever.

LUTHER.

But how could this be, without falling into the absurdity you have been inveighing against so much ?

ERASMUS.

This absurdity would never have been perceived while your followers were yet warm against the errors of Popery ; you should have took them in this temper, and at this happy season shewn, in a solemn assembly of them all, that as they now acknowledged their present system to be perfect, they could not but be sensible that every future deviation from it would bring confusion to society ; that on this account it would be proper to put the instruments of death, which the bloody and revengeful priest had abused, into the hands of the civil magistrate, who should more temperately exert them against every innovator in religion, as guilty of treason against the state.

LUTHER.

I am not displeased with this glimpse of the unhallowed temple of Erasmus, nor with this favourable opportunity of retorting upon him every part of the charge brought against me : for, to say nothing of the ill grace of setting up infallibility in Germany,

Germany, at the very same instant that I had exploded it at Rome, what weakness or what extravagance have you imputed to any part of my system which is not redoubled in your own? If the foundation of mine was laid in folly, yours is laid in fraud; — If mine shews the way to human refinement and invention, yours shews the way to deep hypocrisy and dissimulation; if mine leads to open and bare-fac'd infidelity, yours leads to mask'd and conceal'd atheism: — In short, on my plan the spirit of religion still subsists, though under a variety of awkward and fantastical garbs, which no wise man indeed would choose; but in yours there is only the dead carcase of it left, and which perhaps the state itself, whose creature it is, would some time wish to see animated, when it is too late.



DIALOGUE III.

ERASMUS and CALVIN.

CALVIN.

YOU seem to triumph; but surely without reason: it was natural for a conversation to end as it has just done, between two disputants so unequally matched as Erasmus and Luther.

ERASMUS.

No; I triumph not for being superior to my antagonist in skill, but truth: that is the only consideration which calls forth my attention now.

CALVIN.

If so, behold a combatant of a different order! one that can call out to you with
less

less insult than propriety, in the boast of a different hero,

Aspice num magis sit nostrum penetrabile telum!

ERASMUS.

And what can inspire you with such peculiar insolence in a cause seemingly so desperate?

CALVIN.

Greater experience and deeper reflection, fresher memorials which my curiosity has collected from variety of shades, and more studious researches into the history of the reformation. In short, I would say that my German predecessor had seen but the dawn of his darling project; its increasing lustre was in my happier day; but its meridian glory is in the present age, and I hope will continue to latest posterity.

ERASMUS.

But whatever peculiar and new either your documents or reflections may furnish, you cannot, I think, deny the truth of the inconveniences which I before charged on the reformation.

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CALVIN.

Some of these I allow, as there will always be many, even in the best projected scheme that was ever offered to mankind: but if these inconveniences had been increased an hundred-fold, there is one effect of the reformation so singularly excellent, that it is sufficient of itself to balance them all.

ERASMUS.

Name it.

CALVIN.

Liberty; civil and religious liberty.

ERASMUS.

The opening is unlucky; and it but ill becomes the arbitrary Calvin to make this boast, who embrued his hands in the blood of heretics, in the very moment that his own was sought after on the same account.

CALVIN.

That act was the capital blemish of my life; but you of all others know how to alledge

alledge in my behalf, that heresy was the prevailing dæmon of the age, that it had taken possession of the hearts of mankind, and was not totally cast out even from the exorcisers themselves. I impute it therefore in some degree, not to the man, but the times ; not to the religion I embraced, but to that which I shunned ; not, in short, to the candid and benevolent spirit of the gentle reformation, but to the remaining leaven of that acrimonious system which the bigotted Papist had contrived.

ERASMUS.

Your plea, I think, is more artful than solid ; and however my knowlege of those times may enable me to plead in your favour, be assured that nothing within reach of that knowlege will excuse you.

CALVIN.

Let me then confess farther, that much of this guilt must be imputed to the stern and rigorous principles of which I was composed ; and a zeal for true religion mingling its ardors with this frame ; and the

the heresy of Servetus being charged in part with atheism, I was naturally pushed on to excesses which I was not aware of. Yet, in spite of what I myself, or the most ingenious advocate, can urge in my defence, the crime was of such a deep and malignant cast, as is only to be atoned for by never-ceasing penitence and tears.

ERASMUS.

Your compunction and not your arguments induce me to pass this blemish over. Go on to confute now, if you are able, the two capital objections I brought against the reformation.

CALVIN.

To the first of them, in one sense, I have but little to reply; that is, if it takes in the multiplication of complex systems and creeds, and the enforcing them with penal and sanguinary laws, the inconsistency is too manifest for me easily to remove. The horrors which I have felt for the crime just mentioned, the long experienced and happy effects of the most diffusive moderation, together with my con-

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stant and friendly conversation with shades of this enlarged and benevolent turn, have changed the bent of my violent disposition, and brought me over with full affections to their more charitable opinions ; so that if I was to live again, the articles of my religion should be natural, easy, perspicuous, and few ; and exclusive of atheism and blasphemy, of mad fanaticism, and such extravagant principles as sow dissention among friends, unhinge establishments, and set kingdoms in a flame ;— I should be for an universal toleration of every religious opinion.

ERASMUS.

But by yielding to me in this objection you seem not to be aware, that you double the force of the other, and split the plain and simple religion of Christ into a yet greater number of superstitious fooleries than I had set before Luther.

CALVIN.

I had acknowledged before, that there never was, and never can be any thing so excellent produced, but it will be attended with

with some inconveniences, and this that you mention is the capital one of the reformation: but yet in this worst view of it, it is by many degrees preferable to Popery; so that if you oppose to the reformers their confusion and infidelity, you will let me oppose to the Papists their hypocrisy and atheism.

ERASMUS.

But why so?

CALVIN.

Because they are the natural result of force and corruption in religion. When once men are obliged to admit what their reason disapproves, they admit it only in shew, and slide, as it were, insensibly from a false religion to none at all. And that this reflection is supported by fact, appears from the accounts of those inquisitive travellers who inform us, that if we look for atheists, we must go to the land of the church.— And then as to that universal hypocrisy which prevails amongst Papists, you certainly must admit it, who know that they make an open profession of a
system

system so diametrically opposite to that of Christ, that if an apostle from heaven was to reform the world, and preach up the gospel in the streets of Rome, he must suffer a fresh and heavier persecution under the pretended vicegerent of Christ, than he had done under those who denied his miracles, and abhorred his name.

ERASMUS.

This may be so; yet whilst this atheism is concealed, and this outward shew is regularly carried on, the order of society may be very well maintained.

CALVIN.

Then certainly it may be yet better maintained, where Christianity wears only that motley garb you so much dislike; for hypocrisy, in the profession of our faith, is the natural parent of hypocrisy in the conduct of our life, and concealed atheism is often able to shed its malignant venom in a wider sphere, and with greater security, than when it is openly professed. But now, in the lands of unlimited toleration, there will be an appearance of con-

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fusion,

fusion, and that is all. There will indeed be thousands of Opinions, but so visionary and romantic, that they will but just see the light, and for want of being checked, will immediately expire : there will be thousands too that seem of some consequence, but the difference being but inconsiderable at their birth, it will in time intirely vanish.—There will be some few too, where the disagreement is great, and of consequence lasting ; but even in these their respective patrons will not be positive and fierce : every one will go contented to his own form of worship, and be no more angry at his neighbour's different opinion, than he is at his different features, shape, or complexion.

ERASMUS.

If I could once see this verified in fact, I might be a convert to your system.

CALVIN.

It is so, then, in that very country from whence you derived your birth. And now having removed your principal difficulty, how

how will you rejoice with me at the review of those manifold blessings which the Reformation has produced! Nay, it would be sufficient to recommend it to Erasmus, if I was to mention only one, which is, that it has enlarged the mind, softened the temper, and refined the manners: it has made men more tolerant of others principles, and less tenacious of their own:—it has removed pride and fierceness and bigotry from conversation:—in short, it has principally contributed to give the true polish to civil life, as well as to spread the finer arts over the habitable world.

ERASMUS.

You have touch'd here one of those master-strings, which commands my reason and brings over my affections.

CALVIN.

I shall touch another, when I tell you, that it has dissolv'd the monasteries, those nests of peevish and illiterate drones, who, under pretence of purer and more exalted devotion, became a reproach to their religion, and a burthen to the community.

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ERASMUS.

This is most true.

CALVIN.

I shall touch another still, when I inform you farther, that it has reduced their festivals, and called forth their saints from the useless pomp and splendor of devotion ; it has put them upon active and laudable pursuits, and convinced us by experience, that they are not securer in their fame and virtue who count endless beads for the attainment of heaven, than they who in honest and industrious callings seek wealth on the earth.—I should make no end, if I was to insist on all the grievances which Popery introduced, and Protestantism has removed ; upon purgatories extinguished, and legends exploded—upon charms dissolved, and demons chained down—upon inquisitions abolished, and tributes withheld. I will pass over them all, to dwell on that delightful and transporting view, the introduction of civil liberty into all those fortunate countries where it has effectually

fectually taken root and flourished.—You have not forgot England.

ERASMUS.

No; nor ever shall while gratitude can find a place in the human breast.

CALVIN.

Yet during the lives of those princes who bore sway while you flourished, there were many things that must have given offence to the ingenuous temper of Erasmus. In the reign of the last, particularly, who had in part thrown off the pontifical dominion, the remains only of Popery produced such freakish bigotry, and such shocking barbarity, as is painful to me to remember: in the reign of his daughter, what you would call the reproach of the Reformation, obstinate and conceited Puritanism began to shake that absolute and despotic frame, which has since been melted down into that just distribution and happy equipoise of power, which the enraptured statesmen of former ages beheld only in idea.

ERASMUS.

I wish you could say likewise, that it has improved the rough and illiberal manners, the coarse and inelegant form of living, which then prevailed among that generous people.

CALVIN.

It has done all this, and more. It has wrought in that country as total an alteration, as if it had changed its very air and soil. It has adorned its buildings, and beautified its cities;—it has given neatness to its fields, and fertility to its deserts;—it has diffused knowledge and industry through its various inhabitants; made them active in commerce, and skilful in arts, profound in science, and polished in amusements.—But what is infinitely more than this, it not only, as I said, brought in freedom to them at first, but it has made them watchful over it afterwards; it has not only made them watchful over their own liberties, but those of their fellow-creatures also; it has not only on this account brought their armies into the field, but wafted

wasted their fleets over the seas.— In one word, it has borne them on swift wings to remotest states on the first touch of oppression, and made them, in some sort, guardian angels to mankind.

I can say no more—the rest is rapture.—





DIALOGUE IV.

MARY OF BURGUNDY and MONTAIGNE.

MONTAIGNE.

YOU may say what you please, but certainly your's was a very ridiculous death : because you had hurt yourself in a certain part, which it naturally gave you offence to name, you would hinder its being looked at, and so take pet and die.

MARY.

I wonder to see a man of your education so dim-sighted here. Why my pet was no more than thousands have taken before me ; and you of all people should know it, who had seen the manners of a court, and the refined turn of thinking which frequently prevails there.

MON-

MONTAIGNE.

Let me have seen them as much as you please, yet I know of no such example at all; there certainly was not one in all the courts of my time; and, as far as I can judge of those since, they have not even a chance of ever producing another.

MARY.

Indeed you do me a great deal of honour; I did not think this piece of female heroism so singular as never to be matched again, even in those higher spheres of life, where exalted notions should be common.

MONTAIGNE.

Nay, this second mistake is still greater than your first; in the higher spheres you mention, where exalted sentiments prevail, the very species of these examples is extinct; and if any one of them is ever seen, it is in some obscure and homely shed, the simple mistress of which complains of she knows not what, and dies she knows not why.

MARY.

MARY.

I do not think your reflection just; but pray, for my sake, be less severe in your censures on this occasion.

MONTAIGNE.

No; you of all others have the least claim to clemency here: What! an heiress of the Low Countries; one that was sought for as a wife by all the world;— one that was given backwards and forwards in marriage an hundred times;— one that from her very infancy had been used to the gross idea of an husband, and to have his several qualifications canvassed and laid open;—one that was to lie in in state, and to have herself and children exposed to grave statesmen and uxorious senators —

MARY.

You may spare the sequel; for though you aggravate the matter ever so much, what would it all shew, but that my delicacy was very excessive, and that I died a martyr to this, as others had done to more shameful passions?

MON-

MONTAIGNE.

But yet, in some other things, your delicacy was not so excessive, if what your confidante said, came, as it is probable, immediately from you; for her answer to Lewis the XIth's ambassador was, that her mistress was fit for a man, and did not choose a boy.

MARY.

Would it puzzle my ingenious opposer much, if I was to take upon myself all that an unpolished maid of honour was pleased to say for me?

MONTAIGNE.

I confess it is a little embarrassing.

MARY.

Why? Does it require so much sagacity to see, that chastity and delicacy need not always subsist together, and that I might have one of these to excess, and yet have but an inconsiderable portion of the other?

MON-

MONTAIGNE.

This is just possible, but certainly not very common.

MARY.

No; nor the counter-part of it in the maid of honour just-mentioned: for though her enemies allow that she had one of these virtues in perfection, yet her very friends cannot allow her the other; and the numerous obscenities in her conversation, and intire freedom from them in her life, justified the observations of both: in short, I might, for aught you know, be delicate, but not chaste; as she was chaste, but not delicate.

MONTAIGNE,

This indeed may be: but why should you die on this account?

MARY.

I do not wonder at your putting this question so often. A man of no delicacy himself cannot feel the sentiments of those that have.— But suppose I had died for chastity?

MON-

MONTAIGNE.

That would have been more commendable, and more easily solved.

MARY.

Suppose for love?

MONTAIGNE.

More common; and more to be expected still.

MARY.

Suppose for pain, for captivity, or dishonour?

MONTAIGNE.

All of them more justifiable causes of death than yours.

MARY.

To vulgar and undistinguishing eyes it should seem so, but in the clear and unprejudiced eye of reason it is far otherwise: let us bring this matter to the test. What does a duellist die for?

MON-

MONTAIGNE.

Because he cannot bear reproach.

MARY.

So did I.— What did Cato leave the world for?

MONTAIGNE.

Because he could not bear captivity.

MARY.

And why not captivity, but because it ended in one sort of infamy, as my disorder did in another? and neither he nor I were able to support our shares. But if this example be thought of too great dignity to be compared with mine, what think you of that shade who now walks before you with a bleeding bosom?

MONTAIGNE.

O! it is Lucretia, the pride and boast of the Roman world, that admirable pattern of fortitude and chastity to all succeeding ages.

MARY.

MARY.

Bless me! what a profusion of applause ought I to expect, if you begin already with such encomiums on her.

MONTAIGNE.

No: her cause of death was real and substantial; your's whimsical and imaginary: her's had its foundation in nature and custom; your's in neither: at least, if we cannot go so far, we may say with great justice, that she could not after such a misfortune live with a proper degree of credit amongst her virtuous countrymen, and therefore it was reasonable for her to die.

MARY.

This last is the whole of what can be said in her praise, and the preferring an honourable death to unavoidable infamy was all the merit of this so much applauded act.

MONTAIGNE.

And do you call this all the merit? was it not a great deal for a woman to have such

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such an extraordinary degree of courage, to prefer death to a reproach she did not deserve?

MARY.

Undoubtedly it was ; and on this account her example will be memorable and illustrious to the latest posterity. But suppose now, that by some favourable circumstances she had made her escape from Tarquin, in the very moment he was about to perpetrate his intended villainy, and afterwards suffered the same martyrdom to honour.

MONTAIGNE.

No : here the martyrdom to honour would end, and the martyrdom to folly must begin.

MARY.

Why so? what is that nice and undistinguishable barrier, that can separate actions so much alike?

MONTAIGNE.

The custom of the country just now mentioned, in which Lucretia would have met with no reproach if she had escaped without pollution.

MARY.

MARY.

And yet certain of these very countrymen of her's have delivered it down to us in their writings, that it is some reflection on a woman to be solicited; and therefore she could not even then have avoided the censures of all.

MONTAIGNE.

Of all the wise and honest she would; and what could the idle jeers of a few wanton and capricious wits avail?

MARY.

Just as much with some tempers, as those of a whole people, equally wanton and capricious in loading ingenuous minds with infamy for what they never could help: at least there is only this difference, that the degrees of infamy, all of them undeserved, would be greater or less.

MONTAIGNE.

Well, this is however something.

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MARY.

MARY.

Yes, a great deal with me ; for even I in my misfortune might not have escaped the censures of some : that jester, or that clown, that historian, or that poet, who could say that there were the signs of frailty in a woman's face, which led her lover to tempt her virtue, might see some of the same marks in me for suffering myself to be cured.— If I died therefore to be free from these reflections, my courage is as much superior to Lucretia's, as the censure of a nation is superior to a single man's.

MONTAIGNE.

So, you bring yourself off with flying colours ; and however modest you was in some points above, you make ample amends for it in some others below : I could never have expected from one of your character such an eulogy on herself.

MARY.

That I may appear therefore to you to keep up some consistency in my character, I will lower this eulogy as much as possible, by confessing, that the sum of the whole
matter

matter is, that the causes of pain are frequently more imaginary than real; more relative than absolute. A Cato could not bear captivity, nor an Atticus endure sickness; yet a Cato could have endured sickness, and an Atticus have borne captivity: and to come still nearer to the point, a Lucrece could not live after a rape, nor I after my fall; yet it is possible, that Lucrece might have lived after my misfortune, and I after her's: nay, what is more remarkable yet, the very same person at different times and in different circumstances would wonder at himself for his strange resolutions, either of living or dying; and if you will not peevishly deny me the just praises I deserve, I will confess to you, that if I had continued some years longer in the world; I might not have proved so great a heroine as I was.



DIALOGUE V.

ARCHBISHOP LAUD and
COUNT ZINZENDORFF.

ZINZENDORFF.

SAY no more ; it is impossible to justify
yourself to an impartial world.

LAUD.

Then the plea of conscience is of no
weight with you at all.

ZINZENDORFF.

None, except you will allow that the
judges who condemned your master, and
what is more, brought you to the block,
are to be justified on the same account.

LAUD.

L A U D.

But surely there is a great difference between their case and mine.

Z I N Z E N D O R F F.

None but in the commission of greater crimes and less : though many, perhaps, would not allow you this, who had much rather perish at once by the hand of violence, than have their bodies maimed, their fortunes sunk, and their reputation torn in pieces by a Star-chamber decree.— But enough of this : what I chiefly would observe to you, relates to your conduct as a politician and a bishop, on a supposition that your life was not contrary to the dictates of your conscience.

L A U D.

What you only would suppose, happens to be for the most part true ; and as even in this moment of accusation I am supported by the sweet and pleasing remembrance of acting generally according to conviction, you may with the less offence to me single out such errors in my life as are proper to gratify fanatical spleen.

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ZINZENDORFF.

If I should say then, that you was of too narrow and contracted a spirit, too stubborn and intractable a temper, and too indistinct and short-sighted a view, to fall in rightly with the genius of your critical times, I suppose you would have little to object.

L A U D.

Nothing at all; and, if you please, you may add further, that my friends were too few, and my connexions too restrained; my zeal too hot, and my heart too lofty; my education too confined, and my profession too holy, to support me in the various and difficult trials which I had to pass through. In one word, you may say, with my great defender*, who both knew and pitied me, that I was a priest, and that my fraternity, with some few exceptions, were generally unfit to subdue a fierce and contentious age, and direct a froward and humourfome people to their proper good.

* Clarendon.

ZINZENDORFF.

But you seem not to be aware that your qualities were incompatible, not only with the freedom of the English constitution, but with every other of the like nature, and that it was in a manner impossible for one of your complexion to direct rightly the machine of government, either in church or state.

LAUD.

This may admit of some doubt.

ZINZENDORFF.

Not if an attention to trifles tends to dissipate the intellect; if an attachment to ceremony makes us less tenacious of virtue; if the dread of innovation excludes us from experiment; if the awe of the priesthood keeps us at a distance from inquiry: not, in short, if the shackles of ecclesiastical tyranny both sink the spirits, and cramp the imagination, and hinder us in effect from being either courageous in war, or inventive in peace.

E 4

LAUD.

L A U D.

I must grant likewise, that there is something in this charge; and I the more readily grant it, that you may confess in your turn that some of these consequences, and some infinitely worse, naturally spring from your institutes and discipline.— I suppose you will allow, that that government is best supported, where its members adhere quietly to their several departments; and above all, where the lower sort of people are submissive and gentle, and not carried out into wanton fallies, beyond their proper sphere.

Z I N Z E N D O R F F.

This is beyond all controversy clear.

L A U D.

When therefore you load a rude and illiterate tribe with nice and intricate points in theology, and persuade them that with all these helps they are wiser than their neighbours, and in a fairer way to salvation, you make them arrogant and conceited, inclined to find fault with the most excellent institutions, and with licentious tongues speak
evil

evil of dignities : and this is a defect in your institution, so much the more dangerous, as it inverts the very order and constitution of things ; brings objects forward, which ought to be set back ; introduces confidence where there should be modesty, and refinement where there should be simplicity. Nay, what was never yet seen in any well-constituted state where fanaticism did not prevail, it converts the shop into a temple, and gives the bible a place with the shuttle and the awl.—But this is not the worst : I suppose you will grant me another point, which is, that every reformer acts his part the most perversely, who makes the nearest approaches to Popery.

ZINZENDORFF.

In this point we are agreed ; but you will have good luck if you can exculpate yourself from this charge, instead of fixing it upon my innocent followers.

LAUD.

Let us try. Of all the Catholic tenets, there is scarce one insisted on with greater
vehe-

vehemence, than an implicit submission to their spiritual directors, and in this they are exactly copied by both Methodist and Moravian; only with this difference in favour of Rome, that as you yourself confess their people are abject, pusillanimous, and mean; your's are high-spirited, ardent, and courageous: but surely I need not tell you what a terrible engine in the hands of either the hypocrite or the saint, is such a deluded and enthusiastic mob.— Another tenet of the Catholics is, the utility of monasteries and convents; in which the reformers agree, that exclusive of their detriment to the state, they are hurtful to the recluses themselves; that there is always a very dangerous sort of idleness in perpetual devotion, and that no charm or religious trinket, which the pious brotherhood make use of, can ever be so effectual to conjure down the *evil one* as employment. Need I apply this to your sect, or instead of it, shall I ask you whether you remember the answer which Eve once gave to the tempter?

ZINZENDORFF.

I do not understand your drift : yet I can say with great justice, that her answer, *I may not eat of the tree*, was a good one.

L A U D.

But much better would it have been for the unfortunate mother of mankind, if she had said, she was not at leisure : and many of her daughters, equally unfortunate, who pretend, like her, to answer his objections on holy ground, would have been much securer both in their fame and virtue, if, like Martha, they had been cumbered about so many things, that they could not hearken to his suggestions. Need I apply this again, or may not I rather entreat the devoutest of the Methodists sisters not to take it ill to be informed, that her fervors of piety and sallies of devotion have a stronger connexion with unholy raptures, and are more like to bring her to the seducer's arms, than constant employment in the duties of her station ?

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ZINZENDORFF.

I do not apprehend that you can fairly make out this conclusion from the efforts of your reason, or fairly justify yourself in drawing it. There is something in the reflection which requires a nicer scrutiny, and deeper penetration into the heart, than Laud was master of.

LAUD.

So far from it, that though I was really as ill-read in mankind as the noble historian represents me, yet I never was so totally blind as not to discern the strong and indissoluble link between fanaticism and intrigue. But where reflection does not support me, experience often will: nor need I recur to * comedies now in acting to see a drunken female proceed to the tabernacle, with a saint's demeanour, but a prostitute's heart, especially if she shall be welcomed at the door of that gracious assembly, in the kind expression of one of the most eminent of that fraternity, "that Christ loves whores and rogues †."

* The Minor.

† These words are imputed to a certain leader amongst the Methodists: I will not swear to the truth

ZINZENDORFF.

All this is satire, unbecoming your profession and character, and of consequence not demanding any particular examination from me : besides, you join sects together, which, however they may resemble each other in their principal features, are yet separate by nature ; nor can I suffer the Methodist and Moravian to be one.

LAUD.

I disdain your distinctions : all fanaticism, which is the point I aim at, is hurtful both to particulars and the state, and especially such fanaticism as by demanded transports and heats of devotion, and by lengthened as well as multiplied times of worship, tends to make its votaries both idle and intriguing.

I should mention another Popish doctrine, works of supererogation, to which you approach near in your boasted certainty of them ; but this I know, that both the turn of sentiment, and mode of expression, make the report extremely probable.

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salvation and sinless state; but that I am afraid to dip you deeper in this sink of corruption, especially as your sect is of so singular a complexion, and your system is so peculiarly constituted, that no remedy for them can be found.

ZINZENDORFF.

Surely the good archbishop cannot be here at a loss, whose praise it was, above all his fellow Protestants, to have been ingenious in persecution, and to have contrived every method, both of secret calumny and open violence, to make us at unity with one another.

LAUD.

No: the unfortunate combination of heat and pride, so inherent in your sect, makes you superior to persecution; and your cleaving so fast to the sanctuary makes you proof against ridicule. Nay, the great * patron of this latter quality himself, who thought that even Christianity could never have taken root, if pleasanter methods than those of

* Lord Shaftesbury.

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bear-skins and pitch-barrels had been at first made use of, would be here at a stand ; for you stick so close in many respects, both to the letter and genius of the gospel, and cloath yourselves round in such garbs of sanctity, that the keenest stroke of wit can scarce ever reach you, but through the sides of the established religion :— and of the truth of this remark I hear, that there has lately been a celebrated instance in my own country, where a certain comedian having endeavoured to expose your sect, and not being sufficiently versed in the nature and end of Christianity, its doctrines, mysteries, and language, has, together with Methodism, traduced the great doctrine of Providence † without design, and has proved the very reverse of his brother ‡ satirist in a former age, who having abused every being except his Maker, desired to be excused for this because he did not know him.—— And now shall I draw up a short comparison of your errors and my own, as they stand in this account ?

† See the story of the *leg of mutton* in a farce called the Minor, which I am ashamed here to produce at large.

‡ Arctin.

ZINZENDORFF.

No: I cannot subscribe to your representation; it is exaggerated and unjust; it is mingled with insult, sarcasm, and reproach: it is altogether unworthy of the sanctity of the cross: you have reflected on the chaste matrons of the tabernacle; you have traduced the faithful; and vilified the little but genuine flock of Christ.

LAUD.

True fanaticism still! But this will not hinder impartial minds from agreeing with me, when I say, that my principles tend to make devotion too phlegmatic; your's to make it too inflammatory:— mine, to slacken religious inquiry where it is needful; your's, to excite it where it is pernicious:— mine, to deaden the mental faculties in their proper pursuits; your's, to push them on to every extravagance:— mine, to keep the people too much in awe; your's, to set them loose from all decent restraint:— mine, to reduce their courage below its genuine point; your's, to give it both a strength and edge that is dangerous
to

to the community :— mine, in short, tend to compose, but with some degree of stagnation ; yours, to agitate, but with some degree of fury.—— It were to be wished, perhaps, that some critical medium between these two extremes might be found : and I am glad to hear, that some approaches have been made to it, in the mild deportment, and temperate character of the British church and state, since my distracted times.



F DIALOGUE



DIALOGUE VI.

MARGARET OF AUSTRIA,
and OTHO.

OTH O.

WHat is the matter? You seem highly delighted.

MARGARET.

Oh! even to ecstasy!

OTH O.

Yet one would think the company of that grave philosopher you just now parted with, was not the best fitted to bring about that effect.

MARGARET.

You are mistaken; the graver and more important the person, the greater must be my

my transport on the present occasion.—I have been just now informing Cato of the great triumph I have gained over him and Adrian, by the assistance of an ingenious Frenchman, who has maintained that the manner of Cato's dying was too pompous, that of Adrian too trifling, but that mine was neither : that it partook sufficiently of fearlessness and sedateness, the two principal constituents of an excellent death, by my being able to compose the following epitaph in the height of a storm, in which we expected every minute to perish.

Marg'ret of Austria here is laid,
Who marry'd twice, yet dy'd a maid.

OTHO.

And is this all the foundation of such extravagant raptures ?

MARGARET.

All ! why it appeared so solid even to Adrian himself, who is made superior to Cato, that he was forced to ask me in rail-lery, whether the epitaph was not made on shore ?

OTHO.

And yet, if you will talk with me a little on that subject, I make no doubt but I shall spoil your mirth, and will answer for it that you shall never be asked that question a second time.

MARGARET.

Ay! am I so soon to be reduced?

OTHO.

Yes, and every one else that disputes the prize with Otho; which I suppose your late conquests have made you vain enough to do.

MARGARET.

Why I should think indeed there is no great vanity in claiming the superiority over Otho, if an impartial stander-by has already given it me over Cato.

OTHO.

Let us see then. When you came to die, you was chiefly concerned about losing your life before you had lost your virginity.

MAR-

MARGARET.

This is too fatirical; I do not care to have things set in so ludicrous a light.

OTHO.

But how can we help it? the matter is really so; and I do not see what your Frenchman himself could do in this case. How has he managed this point?

MARGARET.

Like one that had a greater respect both for my honour and delicacy than you have: he has just made Adrian to object it, and left him without an answer.

OTHO.

It is no wonder then that you come off so victoriously in that conference: but this will not do with me.

MARGARET.

Well, upon second thought, I need not be so scrupulous, and can alledge in my behalf many of the most excellent women in

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antiquity, who lamented their hard fate, in dying before they were married ; nay, I can bring examples from my religion itself to bear me out,

OTHO.

You need not give yourself that trouble ; I do not want you to prove the reasonableness of the point, but confess it.

MARGARET.

I have partly done so ; go on.

OTHO.

Since then the two principal things you grieved for, were the deprivation of your existence, and the never having tasted one of the principal blessings contained in it—

MARGARET.

I never allowed this ; I cannot bear the thought of it ; if you go on thus, I'll unsay all again.

OTHO.

Bless me ! what a rout is here about this same virginity of your's ? You make as much
to

to do about it as if you was upon the point of preserving it a second time. But however it is no matter; if you find your conduct not defensible, you may give it up.

MARGARET.

No : I will not do that neither : I make no doubt but it is preferable to your's ; and that you yourself think so ; otherwise you would construe things better, and set my virtues in the fairest light, instead of putting me to the blush, in defending a point that hurts the delicacy of our sex.

OTHO.

I protest I have no such design, and promise you to make no ill use of this embarrassing circumstance. I will neither accuse you of immodest views, or wanton inclinations, though you should own to me that your very last breath was a sigh that you died a maid.

MARGARET.

I will own no such thing, neither does my epitaph suggest it : you are a very un-

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generous disputant, and I care not what you think of me, or whether we examine this matter any farther. Fontenelle did not use me thus.

OTHO.

No: because he was your defender, and did not care to sift you about a point which he did not well know what to do with. However, that you may have nothing to complain of me for, as your nicety is so excessive, I will offend it as little as possible. I will lower this matter as much as is in my power; I will even leave your name out of the question, and only assert, that as ambition is the predominant passion of men, love is that of women: or, if this is too much for you, that our sex principally aim at grandeur, your's at marriage.— Will this do?

MARGARET.

Proceed.

OTHO.

When you and I therefore were upon the point of dying, we had two things to be

be concerned for, of the last importance to either sex ; I, the loss of the world ; you, the loss of a husband : and surely you will confess that my loss was a little more considerable than your's.

MARGARET.

I do not know whether I shall or no ; all these things are relative : and sometimes an husband is as great a blessing as an empire.

OTH.

Why, now you are come to yourself again, and a proper sense of your loss has resumed its place in your breast : you speak like one who was the real author of the epitaph, and knew what she meant by it.

MARGARET.

When you have run through all the changes that your fancy can furnish you with on a subject that tickles you so much, you may come to something more important.

OTH.

I was doing so, but you stopt me short in my progress, by doubting of any inequality in

in our losses ; yet you should have considered farther, that the peculiar charms and endearments of marriage would have been in a great measure lost to you, as women of your rank are for the most part disposed of without their own choice, and are, in effect, but bought and sold, as the interests of nations require.—However, to shew you that I intend not to lessen your misfortune, I will acknowledge, that an husband is an husband still; and as such, must be always a valuable acquisition ; and that as you was twice upon the point of being deprived of one, it was really a calamity as solid and substantial, as my being upon the point of being deprived of the world. Farther than this I cannot go : and whatever you may think of it, it seems to me a piece of gallantry which even your Frenchman cannot exceed.

MARGARET.

Well; these preliminaries being at length settled, it becomes you to shew, that your conduct was superior to mine in equal dangers and misfortunes.

OTHO.

OTHO.

You are right ; for in that our respective merit will be found principally to consist. The time that the battle was fighting between my army and my competitor's, may be compared to the time of the storm at sea ; the moment I received the news of its being lost, to the moment when the storm was at the highest : my behaviour after that, to your's when you made your epitaph.

MARGARET.

This is a very surprizing similitude ; I was not aware that the resemblance of our circumstances was so great.

OTHO.

You will see difference enough in them presently. During the storm, you was terrified ; during the battle, I was intrepid : when the news was brought to me that it was lost, I was both prepared and unconcerned for my disappointment ; in the height of the storm, and the imminent danger of your dying unmarried, you was neither. After this, you are

are supposed to give up your life and husband with lamentation ; I my life and empire even with gallantry.

MARGARET.

But you seem not to be aware, that this which you so fondly think a triumph over me, is but a defeat of yourself ; and you have no notion of what my defender has made out for me, that intrepidity on this occasion is more blameable than fear ; that such a firmness as you mention is extravagant ; and that of consequence your conduct is contrary to nature ; mine, agreeable to it.

O T H O.

Excuse me ; I could not know that the opinion of my fellow creatures was so altered since I was one of them ; and I always thought, that totally, or in great part, to subdue natural propensities, was on many occasions the greatest merit ; and if I am not mistaken, from what you have dropped, your defender himself has insensibly slid into this truth, at the same time that he endeavours to subvert it : for what is it that he has made your chief excellency at the hour of death ?

MAR-

MARGARET.

My sedateness and tranquillity, in being able to compose my epitaph.

OTHO.

And yet disturbance and agitation of mind in the dreadful situation you was in, is as natural a thing as fear.

MARGARET.

True.

OTHO.

To commend you therefore for conquering one passion, and giving loose to another, is chimerical enough.

MARGARET.

But you cannot say I gave a loose to fear; for tho' it was not quite laid aside, it was to a certain degree: which was the exact medium between extravagant grief and insensibility.

OTHO.

This way of arguing is as chimerical as the other: the degree of courage can never

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ver be excessive, whilst we keep our senses, and have a due portion of feeling left: in this case, a total conquest over fear has always been looked upon as the height of heroism. If you would have this point further illustrated, it may be done from our own examples; as long as my passion for empire, and your passion for an husband, prevailed; that is, as long as a proper sense of those blessings held its place in our breasts; the less the regret with which we parted with them, the better; for some there will always be, as even I myself must own.

MARGARET.

But you should consider yet what is farther alledged for me, that I was a woman; and as such, permitted by education and custom to break forth into sallies of grief and lamentation in misfortunes, and that it was very meritorious to get over this.

OTHO.

It is true; and as a woman your behaviour was great enough; but then as a woman you should have been afraid of contending

tending with the most intrepid among men; and except you had come fresh from the imaginary conquests over some of the most illustrious of my countrymen, I should have been ashamed of urging the strongest part of my conduct against you. This is yet behind. Tell me therefore, if the ship you was in had been in a battle instead of a storm; if it had been equally in danger one way as the other; and if you had been equally certain of death by falling into the hands of the enemy, as if you had sunk into the sea; would you not have been glad that another ship had appeared on a sudden to assist you?

MARGARET.

There is no doubt to be made of this.

OTHO.

And would you not have been desirous that it should engage in your behalf, though the victory was uncertain, and most of the company, both in the one ship and the other, were like to end their lives in the conflict?

MAR-

MARGARET.

This is but natural.

OTHO.

As natural as the fear we have been talking of ; and yet totally to subdue it, as I did, and not by halves, as you and your defender would, is certainly the most heroical part ; for I should have hindered the ships, as I did my army, from fighting ; I should have chosen rather to have perished by myself, than that thousands should perish for me.

MARGARET.

This is harder to believe, than that my epitaph was made at sea ; and if Adrian was here, he would be more scrupulous on this head than the other.

OTHO.

Take it therefore upon a better authority than we have your epitaph ; that of an historian whose talent was not flattery, and who could have no interest in praising me. My army, though it was beaten, wanted no
en-

encouragement from me ; on the contrary, they assured me, that they were ready to suffer farther the utmost extremities in my defence : those that stood near me clasped my knees, those that could not reach me stretched out their hands, all beseeching me to renew the war, for which fresh supplies remained ; confidently asserting, that these being encouraged by the unanimity, the ardour, nay even the enthusiasm and fury, of those that were present, would give me again at least an equal chance for the empire with my competitor. I declared to them, that I thought it not worth while to expose so much courage and fidelity for the sake of a single life ; and I sacrificed it accordingly, without either lamentation or fear. — This is the sum of this extraordinary transaction, but the circumstances of it are such as I forbear to draw forth in their full force against a woman. Let it be some consolation to you to have contended with ОТНО, about a point in which no man has yet come up to him from the foundation of the world.



DIALOGUE VII.

ANNA BULLEN and MONIMA.

[MONIMA was a Greek lady, of singular beauty and merit, who having been much sought for, and solicited by Mithridates as a mistress, to no purpose, was at length betrothed to him as a wife; and after a life of much torment and vexation, ended it in the manner related below.]

ANNA BULLEN.

COME to my arms, thou sister in affliction! Come, and let us dwell with sweet recollection on the misfortunes that are past!

MONIMA.

Who art thou that so fondly greetest, and claimest an affinity in distress to the unhappy Monima?

ANNA

ANNA BULLEN.

A princess of a remote and fortunate isle, one born in a private and humble condition, free from the reverses and disappointments of the great; and yet unaccountably singled out to be dressed up in royalty, and doomed from thenceforward to live unhappily, and die untimely.

MONIMA.

Oh! well does this short abstract of your history resemble mine. Already do I see two unfortunate victims to the hand of power. But I hope you resemble me as well in my virtues as misfortunes, and was led, like me, to the royal bed with honour.

ANNA BULLEN.

Yes; and was tempted and courted too, like you, to come to it with dishonour: and, like you, still resisted all the baits of grandeur, and allurements of ambition.

MONIMA.

And yet, see the rewards of chastity and virtue! See what we got for beauty sub-

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dued, and liberty given up ! O isles of Greece ! how foolishly was the solid happiness, which your retreats afforded, exchanged for the splendid and magnificent captivity of a tyrant's seraglio !

A N N A B U L L E N .

So : I see your historian has not given us an unfaithful portrait of you, when he has drawn you lamenting your unfortunate beauty, which had given you a master, instead of an husband ; and had surrounded you with a guard of ruthless barbarians, instead of the sweet and endearing society of the conjugal state,

M O N I M A .

How much reason I had to do this, you may know farther from my manner of dying. I acknowledged the death which my tyrant commanded, only because he could live no longer himself, as a favour : I looked upon this favour as increased, by his leaving me at liberty to choose my death : I hung myself up in the royal fillet that was given me at my marriage, and only desired it to do me that melancholy piece of service, as
it

it had never done me any before ; but it was not able to do even that ; it broke in the operation, and then, spitting upon it, as it deserved, I gave my throat to the executioner.

ANNA BULLEN.

I protest your fate even shocks me yet, though I had read it before, and am now secure from another accident of that kind.

MONIMA.

But why, if my fate made such strong impressions on you, did you suffer them to be so soon effaced ? Why, when you had so well resisted the allurements of your lover one way, did you so unwarily yield to them another ? Why did not my example, which you was so well acquainted with, inform you, that the wife of a tyrant could not be much more happy than his mistress ? Why, in short, is this the first time you make use of my history ? and why did not you avoid those rocks and shelves on which I had split before you ?

ANNA BULLEN.

Because those rocks and shelves were more covered to me than they were to you. I was born in an island, which, both from its situation and government, was altogether free from those dire commotions with which your country was infested ; and I was married to a monarch, who both from the nature of his religion and education, as well as the custom and manners of his countrymen, should have behaved better to his consort. No sudden invader was like to conquer his realm ; no intrigues of a seraglio were like to supplant me in his affections ; no unnatural right was asserted over a wife, as over a slave ; and no barbarous usage prevailed of being sacrificed on a husband's tomb ; all which were impediments to the stability of your repose : and yet for all this, I died publicly on a scaffold, and fell as much a victim to my tyrant's resentment, as you did to your tyrant's love. But besides all this, there is something that gives a peculiar edge and sharpness to my sufferings, above what I have seen in yours.

Mo-

MONIMA.

That is hard indeed.

ANNA BULLEN.

Your name is delivered down to posterity with all the applause it deserves; and Plutarch has made you speak in a manner suitable to the character of so excellent a person; whereas my memory has been insulted, and my weakness loaded with every possible aggravation; my good-nature has been charged with folly; my * brotherly love with incest; my † beauty has been changed into deformity; my —

MONIMA.

No more. — We both have suffered enough to deliver to future ages this important lesson, that no such marriages as ours are ever like to be happy. Come,

* Alluding to the crime for which Henry made her suffer.

† Alluding to the strange reflexions the Papist Saunders makes on her person; as, that she had a hump-back, double rows of teeth, &c.

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therefore, and let us join in cursing, with a voice so loud that the living may hear.

ANNA BULLEN.

What?—But I am so linked with you in sentiment and misfortune, that I need not ask any question. Go on.

MONIMA.

First, let us curse in general the dismal and horrid effects of ambition, both in women and men.

ANNA BULLEN.

But especially in our softer and more delicate sex, who were formed for the enjoyment of much calmer satisfactions than at best that turbulent and stormy passion can afford.

MONIMA.

Let us curse those mean and parasitical spirits, those paltry retainers to the luxury of a court, who, struck with the gilded bait of grandeur themselves, are constantly displaying it to others; who aid, as in my case, the prince to seduce the woman, and
lead

lead her from a low and peaceful state, not to empire, but destruction.

ANNA BULLEN.

Or, if not to that, yet to certain hazards, tumults, and vexations ; who only raise her to an eminence where she can see her equals rejoicing in the quiet she has lost ; and who make her change the plain and simple enjoyments to which she was born, for a set of strange and unusual pleasures, in which there is neither relish nor safety.

MONIMA.

But let us doubly curse those haughty and tyrannical monarchs, who vainly think that women were made only for their fakes, and use them accordingly.

ANNA BULLEN.

But more especially that stern and rigorous part of them, those savage and pitiless hearts, who can behold the violent and untimely death of their wives, with the same indifference they could that of a sparrow.

Mo-

MONIMA.

Like mine; who could not bear that I should survive him a moment; but churlishly pulled me into the same grave with himself.

ANNA BULLEN.

Or like mine, whose resentment was raised for nothing, and which yet no innocence could move, no tears could soften, and no afflictions subdue.



D I A-



DIALOGUE VIII.

PHILIP DE COMINES and ARCH-
BISHOP KING.

ARCHBISHOP.

BElieve me, most illustrious shade, nothing could have been more fortunate to me than this meeting; there is not one amongst the dead that I more passionately desired to see: your great experience in human affairs; your consummate knowledge of your fellow-creatures; your admirable sagacity in penetrating the true causes of things; your singular frankness and sincerity; your temper, your life, and religion; in short, all the most excellent qualities of the head and the heart in conjunction, make me impatient to argue with you on a subject of the last importance to mankind.

PHI-

PHILIP.

So! 'tis well we are amongst the dead; or, by this pompous opening, I should suspect you of other designs than you profess; if you was like to gain any thing of me by flattery, it might well give me some reason to be upon my guard, to see myself adorned with such a rare assemblage of virtues as scarce ever met in any single man.

ARCHBISHOP.

Yet you would soon have acquitted me of any such design, if we had been living, when you had heard farther what I was going to say: for, notwithstanding this rare assemblage of virtues, you have erred in a capital point as grossly and as dangerously to your fellow-creatures as if you had not one:—You remember your famous history of your master Louis XI. and, in particular, your pathetic description of his miseries in dying.

PHILIP.

As well as if it was before me; no pity for my fellow-creatures ever affected me more.

ARCH-

ARCHBISHOP.

It is well if it did not too much ; and made your grief so get the better of your understanding, that you insensibly grew atheistical as you wept over him. I will draw up this in as concise a manner as I can, from that celebrated work. After having given us the history of this monarch's life and death, and having assured us that you knew him, and waited on him in the prime of his age, and in his greatest prosperity, you conclude thus : " I believe, " that from his cradle to his grave, he never had any thing but all manner of " trouble and vexation ; and I am apt to " think, that if we were to reckon all the " days of his life in which he had more " joy and pleasure, than pain and grief, we " should find but very few ; and, upon " the whole, we should find full twenty " days of trouble and grief, to one of " pleasure and contentment." And besides, you farther add, as a necessary consequence of this, that poor and mean persons have but little happiness to expect in this world, since so great a prince suffered and laboured so much.

PHI-

PHILIP.

And what is there in all this, that can fix upon me so odious an imputation as that just now mentioned?

ARCHBISHOP.

One would think that it needed not half your penetration to discover it at first sight; and that as well the last scene of your master's life, as your whole train of reasoning on that melancholy subject, necessarily tend to exhibit such an unlovely picture of the great Creator of the universe, as to raise in us violent doubts of his benevolent disposition.

PHILIP.

Well, but however this be, what I have advanced is no more than what has been said a thousand times, both before I lived, and after it. I could bring you, at one view, a multitude of authors of the most opposite qualities, interests, and complexions; poets, historians, divines, orators, moralists, and philologists, who have all agreed with me in this sentiment; and, if this
was

was not enough, I could bring likewise the authority of the sacred writers to confirm it.

ARCHBISHOP.

That you could do all this, is most certain; but then it is as certain, that part of them are to be disregarded, part of them are to be condemned, and the rest may be interpreted in a more favourable manner.

PHILIP.

But why am I to be singled out on this occasion from the whole herd of writers, that have concurred with me in this train of reflexions?

ARCHBISHOP.

Because you are more cool and deliberate; because you are more circumstantial in your relation; and because you pretend to have made yourself very minute observations as to this particular. The poets are enthusiastical, the orators are rhetorical, Philip de Comines is neither. Historians take such things on trust; divines argue from systems; Philip de Comines from his own experience; moralists —

PHILIP.

You need proceed no farther, for I will not be complimented by myself into an error that you think so dangerous. I know as wise and prudent men as I am, who have been as express on this subject as myself; one * of whom has selected the lives of two † of the seemingly happiest men in the world, and on examination pronounced them wretched. Another § has considered man in every state he could think of; and in all concludes him miserable. First, in the state of nature, and there he is vanity; secondly, in a state of sin, and there he is vanity of vanities; thirdly, in a state of sufferings, and there he is vanity of vanities and vexation of spirit.

ARCHBISHOP.

You may think, from the epithet just now bestowed on one species of writers,

* La Mothe le Vayer. disc. sur la prosp.

† Louis XIII. and Augustus.

§ Hugo Cardinalis.

how

how little I regard this last authority, and though the other is more to be respected, yet to cut the matter short, if you could support yourself by a million of the same kind, it would all avail you nothing. The point you maintain leads directly to a doctrine as much worse than atheism, as a malevolent God is worse than none.

PHILIP.

Yet neither myself nor the other writers did, I dare say, ever think of this conclusion. We imagined that the goodness of the Deity was sufficiently established, if his creatures were made happy in another state, though they were miserable here.

ARCHBISHOP.

But from whence did you gather, that they would be happy in another state?

PHILIP.

From the attributes and perfections of God.

ARCHBISHOP.

What God? what attributes? what perfections? that of goodness? you have taken

H

it

it away; and what else have you to rely on?

PHILIP.

But how do I take it away, when I suppose it beforehand?

ARCHBISHOP.

That is much the same thing, as you suppose it contrary to all your observations of things. Let us argue from human affairs, which you understand so well. Your master Lewis was tyrannical and cruel above all his predecessors; suppose, therefore, you had known nothing of him but these qualities joined to a most profound and sagacious wisdom, and that you had experienced the ill effects of them in unjust and barbarous usage; would you have reason, for the time to come, to hope for better treatment from him, or fear worse?

PHILIP.

Reason, no doubt, will tell me, that I had every thing to fear from such a tyrant, because I neither was sensible of any good qualities

qualities in him, nor felt any effects of them.

ARCHBISHOP.

Apply this to your supreme Being, in whom you knew no goodness, nor felt any effects of it, and judge what you had to hope for in any future period.

PHILIP.

But how can you say, I know no goodness in the Deity? are there not very visible marks of it displayed over the whole creation?

ARCHBISHOP.

What creation? the inanimate? that is not a proper object of this perfection: the brute part of it? we are not competent judges of it: and the men you have consigned to misery. In other words, what you understand of God's works you have pronounced wretched; and from what you do not understand you cannot argue at all.

PHILIP.

But is there no way of getting rid of this embarrassing circumstance? what shall

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we say to the wisdom of God? is not that obliged to make up the defects of his workmanship?

ARCHBISHOP.

This wisdom, you say, has exerted itself in sundry contrivances to make us unhappy; and if so, folly would be a much better ground for hope. There would be a more reasonable expectation of an advantageous change from the caprice and levity of the one, than the stability and composure of the other. And then, as to infinite power, unchangeableness, &c. in such a Being, the very thoughts of them must make us tremble.

PHILIP.

But may it not be man's own fault that he is miserable? and will not this take off the imputation of malevolence in the Deity?

ARCHBISHOP.

The fault you mean must be indulging our appetites and passions to excess; which if men generally have done from the beginning,

ginning, and probably will do so to the end of the world; many will be apt to think that this conduct is as much peculiar to man, as much a part of his frame and constitution, as it is of brutes to follow where instinct directs.

But let it be granted that this conduct is criminal in mankind, you seem not to be aware, that by this means you are increasing the present difficulty to an enormous extent; for if you make man miserable, by his own fault, in this world, and suppose him to continue so to all eternity in the other, you open such a prospect of human wretchedness, as one would think no benevolent Being could look on without horror. In fine, you may sift this matter as you please; yet, in spite of all that you can allege, and in spite of all that I myself alleged while I was alive, you will find it full of dismal and horrid consequences, which are scarce ever to be got over. But the best of it is, this opinion is not more dangerous than it is untrue. I examined it with the utmost attention when living, and am firmly persuaded that men for the most part partake of the general happiness

diffused over the whole creation of life ; and that those who think otherwise are either slight inspectors into the constitution of things, or men of a desponding and gloomy complexion, who murmur without gratitude, and complain without reason *.

PHILIP.

So then I must be ranked in one or other of these classes ; and which ever it be, I shall not like myself the better for it.

ARCHBISHOP.

It is not improbable but you might have a tincture of both : a melancholy turn might make you inclined to look upon the darker side of things ; and a court was not the best school, nor your attendance on it the properest employment, to turn your excellent understanding to this sort of speculations.

* The author has a treatise by him almost ready for the press to prove this point, and likewise the equal distribution of happiness among the several ranks of men.

D I A-



DIALOGUE IX.

LE CLERC and BAYLE.

LE CLERC.

COME! confess, proud spirit! and let this world, at least, put an end to your numberless subterfuges and evasions.

BAYLE.

But it does not seem to have put an end to a temper equally odious in yourself: for Le Clerc still appears with all his fierce and dogmatical principles; his positive and pedantic airs full upon him.

LE CLERC.

It may become me here to be somewhat confident and elate, as your different situation makes me sure of victory now over an

H 4 antagonist

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antagonist that once knew not how to yield.

BAYLE.

Proceed on this supposition to draw up your charge ; but reflect at the same time, from past miscarriages, how common it is for presumption to fail.

LE CLERC.

You remember your famous challenge to the whole assembly of European divines, to shew that the goodness of God could be deduced by natural reason.

BAYLE.

Ay, that challenge was your bane ; and my repeating and persevering in it after Le Clerc, who piqued himself on theology, took up the gauntlet, gave such an unfortunate turn, both to his intellects and temper, that he never rightly recovered himself again.

LE CLERC.

Be this as it may ; my business at present is another point. You must further, therefore, be reminded, that notwithstanding
your

your insolent thesis just mentioned, you still had recourse for the proof of the divine goodness to the inspired writings; and though you uniformly persisted till death in asserting that this attribute clashed with the common notions and apprehensions of our nature, yet you as uniformly, on the other hand, asserted that you perfectly acquiesced in the declaration of Heaven.

BAYLE.

The charge is so clear, that I have said what you impute to me a thousand times: but what would you infer from so common a declaration?

LE CLERC.

That it was absolutely impossible to believe what you said;—that it is a flat contradiction on this plan to admit the scriptures at all;—in short, that the proof of the divine goodness must be prior to the proof of divine revelation, and that if the foundation be removed, the superstructure must fall.

BAYLE.

BAYLE.

If I had not taken the full measure of your capacity and penetration in the other world, this inference would have surprized me : but it is time for you to reflect, that a man may run, as you did, through the whole circle of sciences, and yet be ignorant of the complicated movements of the human heart : I find indeed that you are so still, and that too in spite of the conversation just now heard between two illustrious shades ; which, without my assistance, might easily have dispelled the clouds which hang about your reason.

LE CLERC.

I do not understand your drift.

BAYLE.

I am now then, in my turn, to remind you, that you have just now heard from the most authentic relations, that men of every class, from the foundation of the world, have insisted on the wretchedness of the human condition, and that to such a degree, that miserable is an epithet almost constantly

constantly joined to mortality ; infomuch that the poet who was famed for his judgment and temper, could not help inserting it, even at that very period which he had marked out for the most happy ;

*Optima quæque dies miseris mortalibus ævi
Prima fugit.*——

And yet most of these complainers were religious; most of them admitted a future state; and most of them embraced cordially the creeds and systems of their respective countries. Is not this exactly my case? and may I not challenge again the whole body of divines, with another formidable Le Clerc at their head, to shew any the least difference between their case and mine?

LE CLERC.

But you forget that they admitted the attribute of goodness in the Deity.

BAYLE.

Shrewd ! they admitted it with just the same consistency that, you say, I admitted revelation ; and both of us, from this part
of

of our conduct, are to be pronounced guilty, or neither: For, was their knowlege of God derived only from his works? So was mine.—Did they, from this knowlege, complain of communicated misery? So did I.—Did they, notwithstanding, profess a future retribution? So did I.—Did they modestly submit their reason to their faith? So did I.—If you turn the portrait, was I inconsistent in these principles? So were they.—Was I a deep dissembler? So were they.—Was I, in short, to be hunted down as an atheist? So were they.

LE CLERC.

Your old artifice, I see, cleaves to you still. Parallel cases were always your peculiar excellence; and by their aid you have often escaped out of the hands of the superficial before; but you have to do with more clear-sighted objectors now.

BAYLE.

I wish I could say in return, that excellence of any kind was your's; but clear-sightedness, I am sure, was not; and I cannot

cannot think that much greater than your's can find any flaw in the reasoning above.

LE CLERC.

Suppose I should allege the declaration that I so frequently made in answer to you, that though a prepollency of physical and moral evil in our world should be allowed, yet, considering the immensity of creation, and the numberless orders of creatures of a more perfect and happier nature, the evils of this state were in a manner evanescent; and suppose that most or all of your complainers had adopted this reconciling principle.

BAYLE.

Though I have reason to think that even this argument was not of your invention, yet I am willing to give you the honour of it, because it so exactly suits with the model of your genius, and so precisely quadrates with the reach of your parts in its application.—My complainers, it seems, neglecting what they did know, soared up to what they did not;—forgetting to make their conclusion from what they thought certain,

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certain, they made it from what they thought probable ;—and overlooking the proof from things which existed in fact, they had recourse to those which might exist only in fancy.—This is exactly my case again, saving that revelation is attended with better proofs, and relies on greater authority, than your idle system of perfect worlds, and finless beings.—In short, we none of us had sufficient reason to admit the goodness of God on the plan of pre-pollent misery below: But the truth is, that in this case, as in many others, we are apt to conclude not as we ought, but as we wish.—If you are for inventions, will the glimpse of this contribute any thing to illumine your understanding, and help you to the solution of this embarrassing problem?

LE CLERC.

It will be impossible, I think, to solve it in regard to yourself; but, notwithstanding your peevish and sarcastic reflexion, I am not against inventions that are natural and just.

BAYLE.

BAYLE.

I say then, that the passions for the most part co-operating with our reason in our judgment of things important, the heart of man becomes on this account, to the wisest, full of dark and intricate mazes; but to such as you, who consider it without this clue, it will always be a bottomless and unfathomable abyss.—Now of all the passions, the two master ones of fear and love, have the strongest hold of us; and they have no where so strong, or at least so lasting a hold, as in the present particular.

LE CLERC.

I would not interrupt you in your career—Go on.

BAYLE.

The ardent desire of living, or, as even an * atheist expresses it, the *immensa vivendi cupido*, has taken such possession of mankind, that you know perhaps where it is said, that neither whips, nor furies, nor vultures, nor wheels, can ever be more mortifying to their apprehensions, than ex-

* The Elder Pliny.

tinction

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tion of their being.—But if this is forgotten, yet I shall gratify you in quoting a writer of your admired nation, who makes one of the fairest of his fallen spirits, under the pressure of consummate misery, express himself thus :

————— For who would lose,
Tho' full of pain, this intellectual being,
Those thoughts that wander thro' eternity,
To perish rather, swallow'd up and lost,
In the wide womb of uncreated night,
Devoid of sense and motion ?

LE CLERC.

I am pleased with the recollection of these two excellent writers *, and wish you may be as ingenious in the application of these passages, as you have been happy in selecting them.

BAYLE.

On this plan then I maintain, that we will not suffer our reason to take the lead of our passions, where we have so much at stake. We will not, with old Cato, have

* Plutarch and Milton.

that

that state extorted from us, which so flatters the expectations, and is so agreeable to the fancy: and though on account of the confessed variety of human wretchedness, we are neither able to deduce fully the goodness of the deity, or the hope of future happiness, yet I may be warranted in saying farther, that if the miseries of mankind were yet doubled and trebled upon their heads, they would still be at an equal, if not a greater distance from this gloomy conclusion. — Numberless would be the expedients which the unhappy would find out:—they would pass with you through imaginary realms of more unmingled bliss, or lay hold with me on the pleasing character of eternal felicity. In short, they would fashion the deity as their hope incited, or their wishes inclined; and looking up to him with ardent and imploring eyes, they would cry out with vehemence, that God never could be a God of confusion, and that he certainly would appoint some fairer portion to his afflicted creatures in another world.

LE CLERC.

I must confess, that your solution is both ingenious and plausible; but I have a multitude of other reasons to tear you from the side of your unhappy complainers, on whose piety you lean: For they might deduce the divine goodness from other principles than those of natural appearances; they might prove it, *a priori*, from the necessity of his nature; they might connect it with his wisdom, or conclude it from his impeccability: they might erect it on the great basis of universal consent; they might, in some cases, admit it from the very doctrines of revelation, either real or pretended; they might infer from them, with some reason, that the present state of man is not his original one; and though it is now full of misery, it was intended to be full of happiness. In a word —

BAYLE.

You need proceed no farther; there is not one of these reasons but is full in my favour; and, if you could produce a thousand more, they would be nothing to the purpose,

purpose, as will appear from your answer to this short question.—Supposing all that I have collected together against the attribute of goodness to be true, does the admission of it on that supposition clash more with our reason, than the doctrine of transubstantiation?

LE CLERC.

Certainly no.

BAYLE.

But surely you would not, on this account, infer that millions and millions of ingenuous minds, who have lived and died in the profession of the Romish Religion, were all infidels or fools.

LE CLERC.

The conclusion indeed would be unnatural and uncharitable.

BAYLE.

Much more so then would it be in regard to me; for surely it must be harder to admit the truth of a revelation, which contained in it such principles as were shock-

ing to common sense, than to see its divinity through the thinner medium of intermingled evils, which generally too are supposed not to have been at first intended, and are afterwards to be done away. In short, as I said before, you seem to be totally unacquainted with the freaks of judgment, and vagaries of reason; you seem never to have reflected, that men are often so capricious and fantastical, that they will let go a cable to lay hold on a thread; that they will reject a religion from the proof of miracle, and admit it from the purity of its doctrine; that they will overlook too a doctrine that has the true air of divinity, and build on one that is earthly and common; nay, that they not unfrequently will be wanton in their abundance, call out, with a certain modern, for greater difficulties in their faith, or express themselves in the rapture of the hot African of old: "I believe, because it is impossible."

LE CLERC.

Well, I perceive that I must give up this point; but there are other particulars of your life and conduct which will not suffer

suffer me yet to acquiesce in it in regard to yourself.

BAYLE.

These particulars perhaps I might not be so prepared to answer ; but surely you should not urge weak objections after strong. — You should remember too, that you had made what you have urged against me the indelible mark and characteristic of my infidelity ; and after having contemptibly supported it in the upper regions, you defend it with equal weakness and poverty here. Adieu.





DIALOGUE X.

JAMES THE FIRST, and THE
ELECTOR PALATINE.

JAMES.

INDEED I must own that your case
was somewhat hard ; but what could
I do ?

ELECTOR.

Any thing but what you did.

JAMES.

Any thing but what I did ? what then
were all the pains I took in your affairs of
no consequence at all ?

ELECTOR.

Yes ; of such fatal and destructive con-
sequence, that if you had all your life been
con-

contriving a way to ruin my fortunes, you could not have thought of one more effectual.

JAMES.

Why you seem to have brought with you into this world the ill humour which the loss of your country occasioned in the other; or else sure you could not so misinterpret my proceedings, and look upon my embassies and negotiations in your favour, at every court in Europe, as so many useless, or even pernicious endeavours to restore you to your natural rights.

ELECTOR.

Ay, there spoke the genius of James the first; and the spirit of infatuation that possessed you above, seems still below more to remain with you, than the objected ill humour with me.

JAMES.

What do you mean?

ELECTOR.

That it was peculiarly your unhappiness, above all other men in the world, to pique yourself upon things that you should natu-

rally have been ashamed of; that a conduct has more than once been the object of your highest esteem, which was either too absurd to be agreeable to the rules of prudence, or too mean to be consistent with the dignity of your station; that your boasted exercises in the learning of the schools, and unkingly knowledge of dæmonology and witchcraft, are not greater instances of the truth of one part of this charge, than all your proceedings in regard to my affairs, of the other.— That even a design to stop a conquering enemy by peaceable admonitions, and make him drop the advantages he had gained, by a splendid embassy, was visionary and romantic; but really to put the design into execution, and by tedious delays to expect the event of it, was in effect to let the enemy know, that he might proceed securely; and that one who, with force sufficient, in such a time employed only ambassadors, would certainly employ nothing else effectually; and of this the confederates against me made so right an use, that they seemed attentive to the father, with a view only of acting more vigorously against the son:—so that my affairs indeed were prosperous in
the

the cabinet, but ruined in the field ; and the crown of Bohemia was so far from being confirmed to me, that even my hereditary dominions were at last divided amongst my most inveterate enemies.

JAMES.

That last indeed was a misfortune which I could wish had never happened : but the issue and event of things are not always in our power : nor do I see how I was to be blamed for not preventing an accident which no human wisdom could foresee.

ELECTOR.

O my father ! if that indeed had been the case, nothing could have extorted from me any complaints of my hard fortune, or any exclamations against you ; but the contrary of this is so notoriously true, that every one but yourself could guess at what was like to come to pass ; the error of your conduct was manifest to the world ; and while your only daughter* was drawn and exposed in the habit of a distressed and disconsolate beggar, the treaty-making JAMES was ri-

* Vide Coke, vol. I. p. 126,

diculed

diculed on the stage, and his passion for embassy became the common diversion and entertainment of the mob *.

JAMES.

These things might possibly have had some influence over my resolutions, if they had come to my knowledge ; but kings you know are generally the last persons that receive any useful hints from such public reflexions.

ELECTOR.

Ay, but a king of that happy country you governed, though he knew not the opinion which the rest of the world had of his management, could never be at a loss for the best and most impartial advice, whilst his faithful commons attended him : and to the honour of that illustrious house be it remembered, that they espoused my fortunes with a steddiness and perseverance that became the assertors of liberty and the Protestant cause ; and no one could have

* Vide Rapin's History, vol. II. p. 215. folio edition. King James was represented in the comedies as sending one hundred thousand ambassadors.

rejected

rejected their wise admonitions but he that looked down on them as his creatures and vassals, and whose senseless pride could not brook their direction in the most important concerns.

JAMES.

So ; you are very free in your censures in regard to parliaments ; but you should not however forget, that, in spite of the many differences between the commons and myself, I agreed at last with them in your favour, and actually dispatched a considerable force to your assistance, under the conduct of your most faithful and experienced general.

ELECTOR.

That is to say, you was then sensible of your error when it was impossible to amend it : for the sending an army at last was like sending ambassadors at first ; both of them so injudiciously and perversely employed, that you begun where you should have ended, and ended where you should have begun.—But how at length was this great enterprize conducted ? What was there in the sending 12,000 men, cooped up in close places,

places, in the depth of a severe winter, and to land in a country where they were denied admittance, so that two thirds of them perished by fatigue and diseases, and the rest deserted; I say, what is there in all this, but what is exactly of a piece with the rest of your proceedings?

JAMES.

But why is this disaster of the army I raised to be imputed to me, when I sent them to the port of a monarch joined with me in the nearest alliance, and who had just promised his sister in marriage to my son?

ELECTOR.

But surely the promise of his sister in marriage did not likewise include a promise to admit your troops into his country, especially against persons he had no mind to oppose; so that this step certainly should never have been taken without more express stipulation than a few ambiguous hopes; and those too from a nation not the most remarkable for their observation of treaties more solemnly acknowledged; but
the

the inordinate ambition of procuring a wife for your son from one of the two principal monarchs in the world, made you so obsequious as to overlook the most obvious advantages, and actually become in your several negotiations the dupe both of the one and the other †.

JAMES.

Well, I see I am to have no quarter, if this part of my behaviour be called in question: therefore, to cut the matter short, I must tell you what I often repeated in the other world, that I could never approve of your attempting the crown of Bohemia at all; that it was always my opinion, that kings governed by a divine indefeasible right; that they were accountable for their actions to none but the Almighty; and of

† By the doubtful promises which Lewis XIII. gave on this occasion, and which he explained in a different manner from James I. he made use of James's alliance to fright the Spaniard, with whom he was at variance about the Valteline; and at the same time refused admission of his troops against the Duke of Bavaria, whom he favoured.— Vide Rapin's History, vol. II. page 233.

consequence, that it was impious for the subjects to arm against the sovereign on any account whatsoever; in short, that it was against my conscience to assist you in what related to Bohemia;—and what can you say to the point of conscience?

ELECTOR.

Why, I say, if this was really your conscience, your conscience and prudence were both of a piece: the one not more directly contrary to all the rules of judging, than the other to all the rules of morality: that it was not more absurd to expect that contending princes should lay down their arms, and forfeit their acquisitions at the entreaty of your ambassadors, than it was wicked to maintain, that the lives and liberties of millions might be sacrificed to one. But besides, considering the limited and elective nature of the Bohemian monarchy, this doctrine should naturally not have influenced my affairs; and it would likewise have been better both for yourself and posterity that it had never influenced your own.

JAMES.

JAMES.

How! am I defenceless in this part too? is my darling doctrine, carefully selected from the word of God, explained by my comments, and preached by my clergy, to awe a stubborn and rebellious people; I say, is this doctrine accounted by you not only impious in its nature, but troublesome to myself, and pernicious to my family?

ELECTOR.

Pray, abuse not the word of God with your capricious follies; nor impute to the wise and benevolent Author of nature such principles as are destructive of the workmanship of his hands.—For the rest, be assured, that the differences these principles occasioned between yourself and the English in your life-time, did, quickly after your death, so fatally increase, that they not only were the absolute ruin of your immediate successor, but were likewise the foundation of such calamities and disasters as that generous people are sensible of to this day.

JAMES.

JAMES.

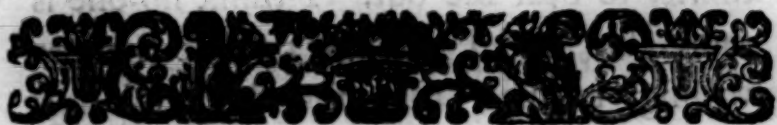
Alas! if all that you have charged me with be true, how must I have fallen from the esteem of mankind? how different from the wise and pacific king?

ELECTOR.

Ay, these reflections are late indeed, but true; and I wish you had before considered, that those glorious appellations, just now mentioned, could never in reality belong to a monarch whose peaceableness was cowardice, and his wisdom pedantry.



DIA-



DIALOGUE XI.

ST. JEROM and EUSTOCHIUM.

[Eustochium was a Christian lady of great piety and devotion; and being under the discipline of St. Jerom, and much addicted to the study of Pagan literature, was dissuaded from it by the authority of this father; and more especially by the strange story mentioned in this dialogue, on the subject of which the dialogue turns.]

EUSTOCHIUM.

TIS well you are come.

JEROM.

What's the matter?

EUSTOCHIUM.

I am so pestered with the company of these Greeks and Romans; and they have so much to say for themselves on the sub-

K

ject

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ject of their literature, that I want your authority to bear me out. I think no one is more able, and I am sure no one is more willing, to shew that the study of it is vain.

JEROM.

I am obliged to you for your good opinion of my abilities; but, in regard to my inclination, I am afraid you have not made choice of a very proper advocate.

EUSTOCHIUM.

Oh! as to that I am altogether satisfied; since no one took such pains to dissuade me from the perusal of these authors whilst I was living.

JEROM.

That may be; yet I think no other authors were more worthy of your esteem. I profited by them too much myself to give them any worse character.

EUSTOCHIUM.

You are strangely altered then, and have forgot those bloody stripes upon the back which you received for reading them.

JEROM.

JEROM.

Indeed I am not altered, and have not forgot the chastisement you mention, tho' it was easy to have done so, as it was purely imaginary; and of consequence made not so great an impression upon me as if it had been real.

EUSTOCHIUM.

Bless me! why you assured me, that all this was done in the presence of the Lord; and you called that dreadful tribunal to witness, before which you then lay. And besides this, you described this punishment so well, and reflected on it afterwards with such a lively and unfeigned horror, that I could have sworn I had seen the marks of the stripes on your shoulders.

JEROM.

Just as much as you could have sworn to my sincerity and plain-dealing with you; and yet I deceived you, and intended to deceive you.

K 2

Eu-

EUSTOCHIUM.

Prodigious! who could ever have thought this? What, my master and guide! my instructor in spiritual things! one that should lead me to heaven on the wings of faith and devotion, to trick me with fancied dreams, and visions, and raptures!

JEROM.

So!

EUSTOCHIUM.

One that was a convert to the simplicity of the Gospel, and was to follow the steps of his leaders, in whom no guile was found, to turn juggler and impostor, and delude simple women with chimerical wonders, and punishments that never were inflicted!

JEROM.

And is this my Eustochium? my meek and humble disciple? my mild, my modest, and condescending companion? one that was wont to obey me in all things, and take kindly the instructions I was pleased to impart to her; for such an one to fly
out

out into passion and resentment, and bring so heavy an accusation against me for a well-invented tale?

EUSTOCHIUM.

Well-invented! why the very epithet is an absurdity, as well as the tale itself, in the religion you professed; for in this there could be no place either for fancy or collusion.

JEROM.

Then this was the only religion in the world that is without them; and why should you think so?

EUSTOCHIUM.

Because this is the only religion in the world that does not want them.

JEROM.

From hence you would have me conclude, that truth never wants the aid of falsehood.

EUSTOCHIUM.

Certainly.

K 3

JEROM.

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JEROM.

This you will soon see. At present only let me remind you, that that high relish for Heathen learning was in great danger of insensibly withdrawing you from the plainness of the Gospel; so that if I had not been beholden to fiction, my Eustochium had probably been lost.

EUSTOCHIUM.

So then I was to be deceived into my happiness.

JEROM.

Yes; and not only you, but millions: and I am somewhat surprized that this should be the first time you was made sensible of this deceit; for you lived in an age when many beside myself made use of the same arts.

EUSTOCHIUM.

It might be so; but the venerable cloak of extraordinary sanctity and devotion covered them from the sight of an artless and undefigning woman.

JEROM.

JEROM.

Then this cloak was a farther addition to their arts: and they deserve more highly to be commended that join them happily together. The worst of it is, I and my fraternity did not; and though my story might be well enough devised to pass with you, it has not had the same success with posterity, which at this day looks not only upon this miracle, but upon all others of the same stamp, as ill-contrived tales, and knavish impostures.—But if they will forgive the folly of them, the knavery, I think, is no great matter.

EUSTOCHIUM.

And yet this, I make no doubt, will seem much the more unjustifiable of the two.

JEROM.

It may do so to the simple and illiterate. But those who have a more extensive view of things, know that mankind must be imposed upon in a thousand particulars. Is the physician worse thought of for cheat-

ing his patient into health, or the lawyer for cheating his client into an estate?

EUSTOCHIUM.

No.

JEROM.

Then why should the priest be thought worse of for cheating his pupil into happiness? nay, why should he not be looked upon in a more honourable light, as his fraud is more extensively useful? why do you depart from the sentiments of all antiquity in this point? why do you not set before you the celebrated impostors of old, and consider in what high reputation they remain even to this day?

EUSTOCHIUM.

I can easily allow their due share of praise to Minos and Lycurgus, without granting it to you.

JEROM.

Then it is, it may be said, because we were inferior to them in collusion, and did not succeed so well in imposture.

EUSTO-

EUSTOCHIUM.

No; but, as I said before, and which you will find it hard to confute, because a true religion despises that artifice, which a false one stands in need of.

JEROM.

And yet you must own, that all probable truths, and especially religious ones, may be obscured; and, in process of time, almost effaced by variety of accidents, prejudices, and passions.

EUSTOCHIUM.

Undoubtedly.

JEROM.

Then why should not we make use of artifice to build up what folly has thrown down? why should not we combat prejudice with prejudice, and passion with passion? if men are not to be worked upon by cool and sober arguments, why is not rapture and enthusiasm to take place? in short, if the mind is only accessible on the side of dreams and visions, of celestial voices,

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voices, warnings, and apparitions, what is the reason they are not to be invented, and imposed?

EUSTOCHIUM.

Because when once the cheat is discovered, it brings discredit on the whole of religion; and, to keep close to your own allusion, like new building on old, pulls down both together.

JEROM.

This is just what I suggested in the condemnation of the gross and clumsy miracles of myself and my contemporaries:—When, in consequence of this, they are detected, they must necessarily do harm. But let the invention be ingenious and fine, let nothing in it be coarsely and awkwardly bungled up, and it may steer millions of unsteady and fluctuating minds to their wished-for haven. Your own example will illustrate all that has been said. You wanted to be alarmed by something wonderful, in order to be brought off from your attachment to Pagan learning; I humoured you by a proper story, and succeeded.

ceeded. This made you altogether a Christian. If I had failed, it would certainly have shaken my credit, and, not improbably, your faith.

EUSTOCHIUM.

Well, but for all this, I cannot yet be reconciled to this double-dealing in your profession; and, except you have something more to urge in your behalf, St. Jerom is much lessened in my esteem.

JEROM.

To prevent that as much as possible, I desire you would reflect on a principle which was universally spread through the Heathen world, that the populace must be kept in darkness, and that a religious lie was commendable. This principle grafted on another in the Christian system, that faith and zeal were meritorious things, often added fire to our invention, and made us stick at nothing to advance our tenets; the strong necessity we thought ourselves under of propagating our creed, made us inclined to adhere to that collusion which was taught us when young, though unhappily

pily the heat and impetus which we had acquired would frequently divest us of those cool and temperate reflexions that were proper to succeed in it. Hence arise both the tricks and follies of our fraternity ; especially in my times, and those that succeeded. In the primitive ages indeed, while the dove-like innocence and ingenuity of the Gospel had their full hold on the hearts of its votaries, they gave so different a cast to the Christian manners, as totally to stifle and subdue this Pagan duplicity. Afterwards, in proportion as the times became corrupt, the Heathen principle resumed its sway, till at last it did it to such a degree, that, whatever you may think of my general conduct, or my particular fiction in regard to you, they are truth and simplicity, in comparison of those lengths of deceit which have since been made use of even in the mart of Christianity.

EUSTOCHIUM.

You have mended the matter much by this justification of yourself ; and it is time to let you know, that I will be deceived by you no more.

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DIALOGUE XII.

CAIUS CASSIUS and ARCHBISHOP
CRANMER.

[The subject of this dialogue turns on that circumstance in Cassius's life, when he fell down before Pompey's statue, to implore his assistance just before the murder of Cæsar: and that circumstance in Cranmer's life, when he first signed the articles of the Popish religion, and afterwards burnt the hand that signed them.]

CRANMER.

BUT certainly it was an odd thing, in one of your principles, to act as you did.

CASSIUS.

I don't know how it happens, but I find that most of my actions have been most malevolently interpreted by posterity; and I cannot now wonder at your finding fault with

with any weak part of my conduct, when the most excellent part of it has already been so much traduced. You know, I suppose, that Brutus has been reckoned a patriot, and I an assassin, for engaging in the same design*.

C R A N M E R.

I think you are one of those who have suffered by the inconstancy of your judges, and that you have had much harder usage from the world than you deserved: yet it should be some consolation to you to consider, that it came from men under kingly governments, who could not reach your sublimity of thought; and as they were averse, by their education, to Roman policy, so they had but an inconsiderable portion of the Roman resolution: and if it will be any further consolation to you to have my sentiments in your favour, you may know that what I am now about to censure in you, is not any part of your moral character.

* Cæsar's murder, for which Cassius is by the moderns often censured. Burnet in particular, speaking of the badness of Ireton's disposition, says, he had the principles and temper of a Cassius. Burnet's Hist. Vol. I.

CASSIUS.

It would complete the satisfaction which this declaration gives me, to be assured that as you are not now going to find fault with my virtue, so you cannot find fault with it at all.

CRANMER.

That indeed is a point of eminence and perfection to which unassisted mortality has never yet arrived: in general; however, I must be forced, with your great defender *, to acknowledge, that your last enterprize was noble; that you was a true lover of your country; and that you had a soul of the highest order.

CASSIUS.

Few Romans could desire more substantial praise: select now what part of my conduct you please, and examine it with unrelenting severity—it will give me but little uneasiness.

* Cicero, who scarce ever mentions Cassius in his writings without praise.

CRAN-

CRANMER.

Then you must be an exception to your sect, who boast so much of their superiority over all others: for what Epicurean but yourself could be caught in so mean an act as prayer, without sensible mortification?

CASSIUS.

Indeed you have touched me in a most vulnerable part; for certainly, next to villainy itself, nothing could make me so much ashamed of myself as prayer†: but when and where was this sneaking action performed?

CRANMER.

At a time when, methinks, it could be but little wanted, and when more than fifty swords, ready to be drawn upon one defenceless man, were enough to make sure work without the interposition of any superior being. You perceive that I mean the assassination of Cæsar: and when you re-

† *i. e.* Sincere and unfeigned prayer: for otherwise the Epicureans, like other people, joined in their country devotion.

collect that event, you will scarce forget your mean prostration to Pompey's statue, to implore his assistance in your undertaking.

CASSIUS.

Yet if I did forget this, surely it could not be very extraordinary, any more than the doing it at that critical season, when the hurry and concern of one grand and important event had absolutely possessed my mind; when it had utterly swallowed up all lesser considerations, and reconciled even the antipathies of philosophers to the liberty of the state.

CRANMER.

So then you would have me think that the natural enthusiasm belonging to such great occasions had made you catch, as it were, a religious one; and that this is a sufficient excuse for the inconsistency of prayer in the character of an Epicurean.

CASSIUS.

I should think that this is no very favourable judgment to demand; or, if it was, it would not become you of all the men in the world to disallow it.

L

CRAN-

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CRANMER.

I am not aware that I am under any circumstances which dispose me to be more candid in my opinion of your actions, than another man.

CASSIUS.

Yet if similar errors in your own conduct be any inducement to it, you are : for certainly a distrust in Providence, to say no worse, in a Christian, is altogether as inconsistent a thing as a reliance on it in an Epicurean.

CRANMER.

I see already my fatal recantation rising up against me !

CASSIUS.

And you have made it rise against you with double force, by putting it in my power to urge it, and shewing upon the comparison how vastly more extravagant your conduct was than mine : for the utmost that can be said against me is, that I was either driven contrary to my judgment by the stream

stream of example and prevailing custom ; or led on, as it were, and prompted by the singular greatness of the occasion, had either acknowledged the necessity, or passionately wished for the existence of a more efficacious divinity than my own :—— whereas you, under the steady persuasion of a religion, where both the interposition of God is promised for the present, and life and immortality for the future, did yet act as if there was neither : and whilst I behaved firmly on so critical an emergency as required more than the feeble elements of Epicurus to support me, you behaved cowardly on the same emergency, when the principles of your religion made you capable of surmounting it.—— In short, if there be an inconsistency in the world, it is to see a Christian of your station, your temper, and your character, shamefully falling at the very entrance of his trial ; waiting, not for the approach of solid calamities, and durable afflictions, but sinking under the apprehensions of even transitory evils—*unanimated* by immortal bliss, and *unsupported* by almighty power !

CRANMER.

Bless me! who could think that such emotions as these I feel could be raised in any breast by the preaching of an Atheist?

CASSIUS.

You may call it, if you please, preaching; but it is only a mirror, in which is plainly represented the deformity of your conduct: and while you see this, I imagine there is no great difference whether Christian or Atheist holds it up.

CRANMER.

But it is barbarous in you to forget how quickly I regained my former zeal, and how manfully I sustained the fire soon after; with what horror I looked back on the action of recantation; and with what firmness I consumed that hand first, that had any part in it*.

* Did Cranmer condemn his own recantation, till he found that this recantation would not save him? or did he ever think of dying a martyr, till he found that he must die for setting up Jane Gray's title to the crown?

CAS-

CASSIUS.

Ay, there the Christian returned to himself in Cranmer, as the Epicurean did afterwards in Cassius at Philippi : in the one case, *you* died with the constancy and perseverance which your religion required ; in the other case, *I* perished with that hastiness and timidity which a distrust in Providence occasioned : in *you*, the strong and solid assurances of future bliss exerting all their force, made you naturally superior to the present distress ; in *me*, the gloomy imagination that the unrighteous cause was already triumphant, and the gloomier apprehensions that nothing hereafter was to be expected by the defenders of virtue, almost as naturally made me finish my course too soon. In short, we both acted uniformly enough, except in the two particulars we are considering ; and in this respect we shall find the greatest part of mankind at least as guilty as ourselves. Neither vice nor virtue is always consistent with itself : and it is no greater wonder that you should act worse than your principles in one case, than that I should act better than my principles in another.

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CRANMER.

I see however that you are still claiming the superiority; and that in this very defence you are for making my inconsistency worse than yours.

CASSIUS.

Undoubtedly it was; as there is no one but must think that it was a great deal easier for you to stand firm against temptations, by the aid of the excellent system you professed, than for me to be free on every occasion from the vulgar superstition.— Yet this I presume we may safely conclude, that considering the manifold frailties and infirmities of our nature, we cannot readily find a better Epicurean than CASSIUS, nor a better Christian than CRANMER.



DIALOGUE



DIALOGUE XIII.

JEREMY COLLIER, and
WILLIAM CONGREVE.

COLLIER.

WELL, I hope you are now convinced that my objections were of weight, and that in spite of your formidable battery of wit raised against them, they still subsist in their native force and beauty.

CONGREVE.

Beauty! why that is a merit which I thought even the rough and presuming spirit of Collier would not now have claimed.

COLLIER.

Yet I am not without my partisans and admirers as to this point; it is not every

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one who thinks with Dryden, that I am either guilty of horse-play in my raillery, or come to battle like a dictator from the plough : and why is it so presumptuous in me to lay any claim to that perfection ?

CONGREVE.

Because the formidable battery of wit you mentioned did at least beat down all your pretensions to that, and shewed the lowness of your expressions, the slovenliness of your metaphors, the coarseness of your similes, the quaintness of your antitheses, the rusticity of your mirth, and moroseness of your corrections, in so full and clear a light, that no one can for ever again look for beauty in the writings of Collier.

COLLIER.

Well, suppose this were granted, yet they may look for something of greater advantage to them, and not be disappointed : if my wit is not so sprightly as your's, my reasons are more weighty, and contain in them a full and solid confutation of the errors of English comedies ; a sufficient antidote
against

against the poison of them in general, and in particular against the dangerous and agreeable one of your's.

CONGREVE.

An agreeable poison in works of that nature is, to be sure, of all things the most likely to corrupt our minds ; and I should be sorry if any thing I wrote should deserve that name.

COLLIER.

That you have reason then to be sorry, two of the principal characters in your plays will for ever bear witness.

CONGREVE.

You mean, I suppose, Mirabel and Valentine.

COLLIER.

I do : both of them the heroes of the plays they appear in ; both of them drawn in the most agreeable colours ; both of them recommended to the esteem of the audience ; and both of them at last rewarded with what they principally pursued : and yet the one was an open and barefaced adulterer ; the other a prodigal without virtue

tue or discretion : the one makes a merit of debauching the wife of his acquaintance, the other lets drop things of such a horrid nature as the most profligate villain should be ashamed of.

CONGREVE.

Well, but if men of such characters are really in the world, why are we to be blamed for drawing them as they are? How can the poet help it, if a Valentine should be expensive, or a Mirabel amorous?

COLLIER.

No one, I think, has blamed you for drawing such characters for the stage, but for adorning them too much, when drawn; for lavishing on them a greater proportion of wit, and other genteel accomplishments, than their real merit can bear; and by consequence proposing them to the unwary hearers, as objects altogether fit for their imitation.

CONGREVE.

But what if it should happen, as it probably sometimes does, that persons of this
mixed

mixed and imperfect character, should really be in all respects as agreeable in their behaviour and conversation as I have represented them?

COLLIER.

Why then they are altogether as unfit to be the principal persons in comedy, as a villain is to be the fortunate hero in tragedy: the one is not a proper object of our pity, nor the other of our imitation.

CONGREVE.

But what is our reason given us for, if we are not to use it on such occasions, and separate what is virtuous or decent from what is vitious or fantastical?

COLLIER.

Ay, here is the spring of all your errors on this subject: but by supposing that we always make a right use of our reason, you are not aware, that you not only destroy your own objection, but likewise the very being of the art you contend for:—for diversion, I suppose, exclusive of utility, is what no poet would agree that his noble science should be reduced to.

CON-

CONGREVE.

Certainly no.

COLLIER.

The principal end then that the drama proposes is, by affecting us with the most forcible and lively representations of things, to make us choose what is good, and avoid what is bad : but how either of these is necessary, if there never was any abuse of our faculties, is not easy to determine.

CONGREVE.

There seems indeed to be some shew of reason in this.

COLLIER.

The truth of it therefore is, that the greatest part of the world, for want of inclination, leisure, or capacity, look no farther than the surface and outside of things, never in the least troubling themselves with curious or laborious researches into their nature and essence : hence it is, that judging of an example in the gross, and struck with its gay and beautiful colouring, they are
pleased

pleased with it upon the whole, and imitate it in part : and generally, for want of superior talents, in that part only which is the most vitious or imperfect.—*Decipit exemplar vitiis imitabile*, is a complaint of almost two thousand years ; and there was never greater occasion given for it than from the characters of the English comedy ; and to this objection you never in your life-time returned any plausible answer, though it was the main foundation of my battery against the stage, and principally bore me up in that hazardous undertaking.

CONGREVE.

But how could I neglect to do that in a book wrote for no other purpose ?

COLLIER.

How ? By a cause the most natural and common among men ; by the intemperate desire of ridiculing my wit, and abusing my person ; of shewing to the world the superiority of your genius over mine ; and endeavouring on all occasions rather to expose my errors, than vindicate your own : in so much that if you had not told us the real design

design of your work, it would have been no easy matter to have discovered it at all ; and the making sport with Collier has throughout the whole such a visible prevalency over the defence of Congreve, that it should have taken its title rather from the former occasion, than the latter : but such are the passions and prejudices of mortals ; from which as we are now free, let each of us without ceremony confess his peculiar imperfection : — I, the deformity of my writings ; you, the bad tendency of your's.

CONGREVE.

Agreed—and to give you an undoubted mark of my sincerity, I will confess to you likewise, that in many particulars besides what we have just now mentioned, you have accused me justly ; nay, and what is more, I will confess to you, that in some other things I am really to blame, in which you have not accused me at all.

COLLIER.

Ay, see the good effects of having nothing but truth in view : why, this is a confession that was despaired of even by me : it exceeds

ceeds my own most sanguine expectations : and I think I might almost answer too for the most passionate admirers of my essay, that they never could believe Congreve more blameable than it had made him.

CONGREVE.

And yet my own judgment convinces me of some capital errors in my works, which neither the most outrageous zeal has accused, nor the most priestly malice discovered.

COLLIER.

So; I see you depend upon the agreement just now made between us, or else surely you would not indulge yourself in such reflexions on my profession : but I shall not however disappoint your present good purpose, by examining into the degrees of either zeal or malice that may be mingled with my performance—pray go on.

CONGREVE.

I say then, that though you have carried the charge against me, in point of immorality, sufficiently high, yet in point of CRITICISM, which seems to be as much your
inten-

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intention as the other, I have escaped untouched from the fire : and except the snarling in your usual manner at a few expressions in a * work, for which I was neither by nature nor inclination fitted, you have left my comedies in full possession of all that vast and immoderate applause my countrymen had bestowed upon them : but as some people gain not from a capricious and ill-judging world all the esteem they deserve ; so others should in justice refund what was too profusely given.—Of this latter number am I, who freely own to you, that I have reason to be ashamed of my own distinguishing excellence and perfection ; that sense so strangely misplaced as mine, deserves a name little better than folly ; and that in things where nature is principally to be regarded, there seems to be very little difference between being intemperately witty and intemperately dull : the truth of it is, the degree of point, antithesis, and *reflexion*, so frequent in my comedies, is what the best conversation cannot support, and in the worst is intolerable ; and however candidly the world may judge of my

THEY HONOUR * The Mourning Bride. W. M. 10. 11

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principal

principal characters, yet certainly those of Wittol and Jeremy are what never have existed, nor ever can. — Oh ! Menander !

COLLIER.

I guess at what you mean by the mention of an author so celebrated for a perfection which you lament the want of in yourself ; but give me leave to comfort you with the reflexion, that by what is left or imitated of that admirable poet, you would not always lose by the comparison ; for though the profusion of wit may make some of your characters unnatural, yet it does not appear in others ; and where it does not, you shine unrivaled even by the antients themselves ; and your Millamant is a master-piece which the world has not yet produced.

CONGREVE.

So much the worse both for my credit and satisfaction ; and I cannot, even in death, lose the mortification of considering, that I have abused a talent most admirably fitted for the improvement of mankind ; that I could not help breaking even

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the unity of action by impertinent scenes of wit, and spoiling the uniformity of the most accomplished characters by stiff replies or poignant reflexions: in short, that I, who, as the dead inform me, surpassed the antients, and even the world itself, in some particulars of the drama, should yet be deficient in two such essential parts of it, as simplicity of manners, and the moral.



D I A-



DIALOGUE XIV.

A STOIC PHILOSOPHER and THE MOGUL.

STOIC.

IT was the opinion then, you say, both of yourself and your predecessors, that the only way to avoid all solicitude about future calamities, was never to think of them at all.

MOGUL.

Yes; and what is more, we practised it during our lives, with a consistency and uniformity that has not always appeared in the followers of your tribe. It has been common for a stoic to pretend to despise pain, and yet fear it; to condemn pleasures, and yet pursue them: but no Mogul was ever known to exchange the luxury, or give up

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the

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the indolence, of the present moment, for any uneasy thoughts about what was some time to happen.

STOIC.

You seem to blame us with a better grace than you commend yourselves; and though I have heard much of the soft and effeminate manners of the Asiatics, yet I find from your setting out, that I may yet learn more of them from so great a master. You will not take it amiss, therefore, if I avail myself of the present opportunity to know the secrets of your art.

MOGUL.

So far from it, that it will be a singular satisfaction to me. To see the pride of philosophy coming to the gaiety of courts for instruction, and the rough stoic bend before a luxurious prince, is a triumph that I have not yet been used to.—Speak.

STOIC.

I should be glad principally to know how you secured yourselves from the apprehensions of death; for though I can in some measure

measure conceive the possibility of never thinking on evils that *may* not happen; yet I know not what you could do about those evils that *must*.

MOGUL.

Oh! here it was that we chiefly triumphed, and out-stripped every contender with us in the arts of luxury; nay, and if you can with any propriety allow that so indolent a race as we could ever be said to rack their invention, it was here.

STOIC.

I expect much from so pompous a prelude.

MOGUL.

And you will not be disappointed when you know, that all the avenues to death were in a manner stopped up by us; that we had most ingeniously contrived such a variety of methods to escape the apprehension, and even shut out the idea of it, that when blue was, according to the custom of the country, the colour for mourning, it was almost a capital crime for any one to

M 3

appear

appear before us in that dress; nay, and what is more, we had forbid, under the severest penalties, the very name of death to be mentioned in our presence; so that not only nothing occurred to our minds about it, but even our very ears were never alarmed with the frightful sound.

STOIC.

The whole contrivance was indeed worthy of the Mogul; and it did not ill become the superb monarch of the East, who thought himself born almost above the condition of humanity, to live as if his end was to be so too: the only misfortune was, that you could never effect what you wanted; and I see already enough of your boasted art to despise it.

MOGUL.

How soon the haughtiness of your sect returns upon you! But that I may offend it as little as possible, let me, instead of praising this contrivance farther, only ask you, whether there is any thing besides the appearance of effeminacy in it, so contrary
to

to the manliness of your systems, that offends you?

STOIC.

Yes; the folly of it hurts me more than the effeminacy: and your conduct is just as reasonable as that man's would be, who, knowing that he should not die in the camp, was satisfied that he should die no where else.

MOGUL.

You will excuse the want of discernment in so unstoical a soul, if I do not readily see the force and justness of this conclusion.

STOIC.

Pray resolve me, whether, at the same time that you forbid the colour of blue to be worn in your presence, you could forbid it in all other places?

MOGUL.

Certainly.

STOIC.

Understand me right: Could you make the elements bend to you as easily as you

M 4

did

did your subjects? could you avoid this colour in every place where your people did not consult your quiet? could you escape it wherever it occurred in the city or the field? in short, could inanimate matter be affected by the stateliness of your approach, and the ridiculous rhodomontade of giving the world notice that the Mogul was advancing?

M O G U L.

But yet there would be so few occasions of seeing this colour, when the opposition and ill will of human agents was removed, that what you mention could not be any great cause of uneasiness.

S T O R E.

Well then, if it should be granted that the whole earth was obedient to your will, yet what could you do with the heavens? would not the sky-colour there be a perpetual fund of disquiet to you? and must not the very ætherial vault itself, that cheers the eye of every other beholder, be hung with mourning for a Mogul?

M O G U L.

MOGUL.

This indeed is something.

STOIC.

And then, as to the prohibition of the name of death in your presence, did you likewise prohibit it in the publick and private histories of your kingdom? were the writings of your subjects as complaisant to you as their conversation? or, if they were, could you expect the same subserviency in the moralists of other nations? and, above all, would the free-born spirit of our philosophy crouch to you, like that of the wretches you commanded?

MOGUL.

I did not expect this.

STOIC,

If you did, had you guarded likewise against the thoughts of all the approaches to dissolution, as well as dissolution itself? did you forbid, with the name of death, the name of all things connected with it, its various ministers, instruments, and means?

MO-

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MOGUL.

No.

STOIC.

Were the slaves that stood before the cowardly monarch as careful of pronouncing the word misery as death? did they never say any thing of famine, pestilence, or sword? were the numberless train of diseases unmentioned or unknown? were, in short, all the various accidents that destroy the human species utterly concealed and kept from view?

MOGUL.

This was impossible.

STOIC.

Then it was likewise impossible that you should be free from this fear; since of the infinite variety of avenues that lead to this formidable evil, you had, according to your own confession, shut up only two.

MOGUL.

Well, this was however something.

STOIC.

STOIC.

No; directly contrary: And I may assert farther, that if you had shut up not only two but a million, your case would have only been the more deplorable.

MOGUL.

Though your sect has been always famous for paradoxes, yet surely this is a stranger one than has ever yet been maintained.

STOIC.

As strange as it is, I make no doubt but that if you had attended, like other mortals, to the feeling of your own heart, and the view of human misfortunes, you would have seen it verified a thousand times. For, as exalted as your station was, I suppose it was not always free from danger and vexation.

MOGUL.

Probably.

STOIC.

STOIC.

Then this danger and vexation, whenever it happened, was always doubled to you above the rest of your fellow-creatures. But if it was not free from vexation, so neither was it free from disease.

MOGUL.

No.

STOIC.

Then this disease likewise had not only every possible aggravation that illness itself could have, but was also increased an hundred-fold, by the dreadful apprehensions it brought along with it of an evil that was so terrible, that you durst not hear it mentioned.

MOGUL.

But why must all this be augmented to me, more than to any other man?

STOIC.

Because it was sudden and unlooked-for; and because it happened to one who had neither been used to bear misfortunes, nor reflect

reflect on them. I will explain what I mean to you by a very celebrated example, which yet probably may not have come to your knowledge, because the word death is in the story.—When the news of his son's death was brought to Athenagoras, his only lamentation was, “I knew that I begot him mortal.” But now the frantic and unmanly grief of a Mogul on this occasion, his wild aspect, and indecent eruptions, his rent purple, his ravings and despair—

M O G U L.

Hold! who told you of all this?

S T O I C.

Experience, as well as reason; from both which I am assured, that men of your complexion are the reverse of the philosopher just mentioned; and on the death of their favourite child, act as if they thought they had begot him immortal. And now on comparison of these two sorts of men, it is easy to discover who has taken the best way to happiness.

M O G U L.

M O G U L.

So easy, that I see you have already determined how I would have acted in distress, and that it is impossible for one of my cast to be as easy under affliction as your philosopher.

S T O I C.

True; for let us depend upon it, that all sudden evils are the most terrible; that they always lessen in proportion as they are reflected on; and that every man who is prepared for a misfortune has half overcome it; that this is not only a doctrine of the Grecian school, but that it is equally true both in the east and the west; and that the man who neglects it is equally unhappy, whether he be Stoic or Mogul.

DIA-



DIALOGUE XV.

MELLINIUS and LUCIAN.

[Mellinius was a learned Catholic writer of the tenth century, who wrote a book on purpose to collect all the Pagan calumnies thrown upon Christianity; but wrote it in so angry and peevish a manner, that by a fate not uncommon to bigots, he laid himself open to all the censure he had cast upon the Heathens, and became himself as violent a calumniator as any mentioned in his work. What he says of Lucian, and which is mentioned below, being more atrocious than the rest of his reflections, will be a sufficient proof of this, and at the same time let the reader into as much knowledge of his character, as is necessary to understand the following Dialogue.]

LUCIAN.

WELL! we are met at last, though I was called an Atheist, and you a Christian.

MEL-

MELLINIUS.

Called Atheist, and Christian? Surely there can be no doubt of my being really the one, and you the other.

LUCIAN.

If we are to be judged of by what remains of our works, there are certainly in mine not so many marks to conclude that I was an Atheist, as there are in your's, to conclude that you was no Christian.

MELLINIUS.

Why thou railer! thou blasphemer! thou buffoon! thou impious contemner of thy own religion as well as ours! who didst nothing, during a profligate and abandoned life, but laugh at all things sacred and profane!

LUCIAN.

And yet in all that life of laughter, I never met with an object more worthy of it than is now before me. Why, if I was to meet with none but such as you amongst the dead, it were enough to make my former
state

state and my present, one continued action of ridicule.

MELLINIUS.

But why am I concerned about the accusation of a wretch who never once spoke true, when he spoke of Christianity; and who, I suppose, was weak enough to admit, with the rest of his fraternity, the story of the ass's head, and the sacrificed child, our naked dancings by night, and the dogs running away with the candle.

LUCIAN.

Well, but you cannot say that I was the author of these stories, or that I ever mentioned them in my writings.

MELLINIUS.

No; because this perhaps is the first time of their coming to your knowledge; otherwise they would have made too pretty a figure amongst your other calumnies against us to be omitted. And yet I wonder they should escape you, for you had raked very deep in the sink of blasphemy.

N

LUCIAN.

LUCIAN.

Indeed they are very remarkable; but surely they are too trifling, and this absurd sort of accusation is too common amongst men, to raise up in you such a storm of fury and indignation.

MELLINIUS.

Say rather, that the crime is so flagrant, that no candour is sufficient to excuse it; that to be unmoved at such things as these, argues not calmness but want of feeling; and that, in short, if nature, according to the sentiment of a * congenial spirit I have been talking with, had any design in forming the choler, it was for such occasions as these, when the very nature of things is wickedly and maliciously perverted; when our holy religion is not only treated as imposture, but the most excellent parts of it are turned into impieties, which I almost blush to mention; when our meetings of charity are transformed into brothels, and the solemn commemoration of our master's death, into suppers of Thyestes.

* Collier.

LUCIAN.

LUCIAN.

This it is to have to do with zealots : what I said was only in excuse for yourself, and I am not half so great a blasphemer as you imagine.

MELLINIUS.

In excuse for me? Pray give yourself no farther trouble on that head : I am not sensible that I want it; or, if I did, know that I receive no succour from the camp of the Infidels.

LUCIAN.

Well then, if you receive no succour from us, let us see how you can defend yourself against our attacks; or rather, because you equally despise both our assistance and opposition, let us see how you can resist your own formidable artillery.—The defaming either particular persons or communities, by such groundless and ridiculous stories as those just now mentioned, is, you say, one of the blackest and most complicated crimes that can be thought of.

N 2

MEL-

MELLINIUS.

True.

LUCIAN.

And yet, of all parties of men, none have been more guilty of this crime than the Christians.

MELLINIUS.

What is that to me?

LUCIAN.

Something; because you are of that sect. But more; because of all Christians none have been more guilty of it than Mellinius. —You remember your famous work *de Obtreclatoribus Paganis, &c.*

MELLINIUS.

I should hardly forget a thing which I hope does honour to my memory, and is the principal action of my life.

LUCIAN.

You will recollect then, that I have there the honour to be distinguished as the capital object

object of your spleen, and am singled out from much more illustrious Heathens with this remarkable testimony in my favour : (viz.) “ God, the revenger of wickedness, “ punished the blasphemy of Lucian by a “ most cruel and shameful death ; for he “ caused him to be torn in pieces by dogs : “ wherefore let us leave him in this “ mangled condition here, not at all doubting, but he will be eternally mangled “ hereafter.” But because no words can be so expressive as your own, I have always reckoned them in the number of those few things that are more particularly worthy to be remembered ; take them as follows : *Deus vindex scelerum Luciani rabiem mortis feritate & turpitudine compensavit. Fecit enim ut vivus a canibus dilaceratetur : Quare illum sic dilaceratum, atque in æternum aliter dilacerandum, eniciendumque relinquamus.*

MELLINIUS.

You are very fair and punctual in the citation ; I wish you prove so in your comment upon it. Proceed.

N 3

LUCIAN.

LUCIAN.

My comment I think is not severe, when I say, that there seems to be no possible aggravation of the crime you mentioned which does not belong to this. For, in the first place, you have propagated an idle and ridiculous story, and for which there is not the least foundation in all antiquity. Then you have rashly made God the author of an imaginary punishment, which required not his agency, if it had been real. And to finish all, you have most charitably consigned me to eternal torments, and that too with a certain grace and manner, which one can never sufficiently admire.

MELLINIUS.

I must own there seems to be something of warmth and indiscretion in this charge, but which may be perhaps owing rather to my temper, than design.

LUCIAN.

Indeed, from the specimen now given of your temper, there is scarce any thing of this nature but may be imputed to it. Yet
your

your own charge against the heathens might have taught you to solve it better: as amongst *them*, so amongst *you*, it was a common and prevalent fashion to blacken an enemy; and not only Mellinius, but his whole fraternity, had encouraged it, as a thing expedient and useful to the common cause.—You see yonder, at a small distance, in as deep dispute as ourselves, and not improbably on the same subject, the emperor Julian, and a zealous father of the church. That father has assured posterity, that Julian, in his last moments, took the blood from his wound, and threw it up against heaven, with this impious defiance, (*viz.*) “Galilean, thou hast conquered.” And yet we know, from one who attended that emperor in his last unfortunate expedition, and who has freely recorded his faults, that he died in the most calm and philosophic manner, without any marks of resentment, either against God or man.—Go now, and boast for what crime nature formed the choler! and consider whether it be yet time to receive succours from infidelity!

MELLINIUS.

So, I perceive you are resolved to let me see that you are sensible of your superiority, and that the mercy once mentioned, is not now to be expected.

LUCIAN.

No; for that is due not to the proud, but to the humble, of which number Mellinius certainly never was one. I must now therefore insist, that the excuse which might be urged in favour of some other men, can never be granted to you,

MELLINIUS.

And so, because I am not a proper object of this indulgence, you will now change its nature, and, in the true spirit of Lucian, endeavour to convert it into gall.

LUCIAN.

You will not accuse *me* of that, though I can *you*, when you hear farther what I am going to say: for it comes from your own scripture and your own comments.

MEL-

MELLINIUS.

Yet this would not be the first time that both our own scripture and our own comments have been polluted, in passing through such hands as yours.

LUCIAN.

You will judge from what follows, whether it be so again.—The poor Heathens, left to the dim twilight of reason, thought it right to hate their enemies; and in consequence of that, did them frequently as much mischief as they could.

MELLINIUS.

True.

LUCIAN.

But ye Christians, ennobled by a sublimer principle, think it right to love your enemies, and return good for evil.

MELLINIUS.

Certainly no two truths can be more unquestionable than these.

LUCIAN.

LUCIAN.

If *we* therefore abused and calumniated your sect, it was in some measure excusable upon our principles, when we thought your doctrines subversive of our religion, and destructive to the community. But when *you*, on the contrary, abused and calumniated us, it was a sort of apostacy from your faith, and a desertion of that great principle for which your master died.—And yet how in all ages you have contended with us in the vile arts of detraction, I suppose I need not any longer insist on.

MELLINIUS.

No, nor any thing else relating to a subject, which it begins to give me too much pain to consider. Adieu!

DIA-



DIALOGUE XVI.

MARY Q. of SCOTS, and Q. ELIZABETH.

MARY.

ONCE more, proud queen, behold us on a level; from which neither artifice nor violence will ever be able to lift you over your unfortunate rival again !

ELIZABETH.

From this opening, one would not entertain a very favourable opinion of your own humility ; and nothing but equal pride in you, at least, could hinder you from seeing, that neither artifice or violence on the one hand, nor strange vicissitudes and misfortunes on the other, contributed any ways to my superiority over you in the other world : impartial

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tial posterity has long settled my claims to pre-eminence on surer grounds.

MARY.

I am not clear in that: I may be warranted in saying, that posterity itself has sometimes acted with the caprice of an individual, and that it is common for subjects to be so dazzled with the comparative glory, or even felicity, of their sovereigns, as to place them higher in the lists of fame, than they actually deserve: This was *your* lot, the contrary to it was *mine*.

ELIZABETH.

I perceive that you must encounter considerable difficulties, in order to reduce me to your pitch, since you already begin to distrust the judgment of posterity.

MARY.

There never were any such difficulties in my way which I could not easily have removed, while we were competitors above: but there the star of Elizabeth prevailed; it
is

is now set; and I tremble at that name no more.

ELIZABETH.

But though you are free from fear, you are not I see from envy: though you tremble not at my name, you malign it:— Jealousy as yet reigns in that hostile breast.

MARY.

This imputation I thought never to have heard from one, whose life was in a manner one continual scene of this detested quality: yet, in general, it must be granted, that the more superior our accomplishments are, the less is our envy.

ELIZABETH.

It should seem so.

MARY.

Yet have even your own historians remarked, that my spirits were used to sink, or my countenance grow pale, at the approbation of the queen of England, as hers did
at

at that of the queen of Scots : But let us impute this to the passion for beauty, which reigns always so powerfully over the female breast; but is more especially tormenting, when, as it happened in your case, this beauty falls to our share in so moderate a degree.

ELIZABETH.

You may spare your reflections : it is no disgrace to want personal accomplishments.

MARY.

I grant it; and therefore pass on to ask you, whether you would be tried on the other branches of the quality objected, on state-jealousy and envy, or on coquetry or love, on hypocrisy or craft, on resentment or violence—

ELIZABETH.

You may stop at once all inquiries of this nature : I pretend not to be free from the frailties of humanity ; but if you would in any degree make good your charge, you must try me as the greatest monarchs would
choofe

choose to be tried, on their true perfections, magnanimity and policy.

MARY.

It pleases me to be able to find you guilty in those points, at a more impartial tribunal than the unhappy Mary found. Let us examine with this view, some of the principal points of your reign.—To free your country from faction, and add stability to your throne, it was necessary that you should name your successor: wisdom required it on the one part, magnanimity on the other. You was influenced by neither.

ELIZABETH.

Both these points are disputable; let us see how you maintain the side you have taken.

MARY.

Where there are many competitors, there will be many conspiracies; and all of them will disturb, and some of them may shake the throne.

ELIZA-

ELIZABETH.

Yet it is as true, that the very number may preserve it, where one had brought on its ruin.

MARY.

This may be, where the competitors rise together, and often quarrel with each other; but not where they rise one by one against the reigning monarch: your side of the question is true, where one can govern only by division; mine, where is no necessity for any division at all:—Your side was politic, so far as it related to the distribution of your favours, and sowing the seeds of jealousy among your servants; mine, as it regards the repose and security of opulent kingdoms: The event justified your sentiments, in the excellent conduct of your subordinate ministry: the event justifies mine, in those turbulent scenes of minorities and interregnums, where the pretenders are many.—But perhaps you may be more accessible on another head. I suppose you will allow, that a parliament unprejudiced and obsequious, that loved equally their queen and their country,

were

were proper judges of what was conducive to its tranquility.

ELIZABETH,

Undoubtedly,

MARY,

Why then were its urgent and almost continual petitions on topic this rejected? If you hesitate for an answer, take it from the observation of your favourite Essex, who was forced in the bitterness of his soul to cry out, that you was grown old, and cankered as much in your mind, as your body.

ELIZABETH,

Supposing this observation to be true, how does it help you? For to do that, I must have been canker'd as well when I was young, as when I was old.

MARY,

That is the very point I aim at: for if malignity be a canker, in which certainly the want of magnanimity is comprehended, there was no period of your age, when it did

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not

not possess you: No sooner was you seated on the English throne, than you acted as if it was to be perpetual: You could not bear the thoughts of its ever falling to another's share: The very glimpse of a successor from any part of the world disturbed you; but the glimpse of it from Scotland was your bane.—But let us confirm this reasoning from another point.—To make me your friend, and secure your future reign, it was necessary that I should be used generously: Policy required it on one part, magnanimity on the other; you was influenced by neither.

ELIZABETH.

Your crimes made it impossible for me to use you generously: And your religion made it impossible for me to trust you.

MARY.

And yet, criminal as my life, and suspicious as my religion was, I certainly should not have treated you in the same cruel and treacherous manner, on a supposition that your lot had been mine: from whence then
proceeds

proceeds this difference? only from your short-sightedness, in not being able to see that unexpected generosity almost certainly makes friends; or, if you saw this, from a certain littleness of mind, which made you think that the general rule would not hold in me, and which made you resolve, like all cowards, never to suffer your enemy to escape out of your hands.—Once more, to take upon yourself what all Europe knew you ought, and to shelter the innocent, as in the case of Davison, was true policy and magnanimity combined: but in the former case you fled for refuge to hypocritical cant, and pitiful evasions; in the latter you punished the best of servants with unrelenting severity.

ELIZABETH.

I cannot pretend to justify myself here; and I was not without apprehension, even when surrounded with flatterers, that this would always be looked upon as a considerable blot in the annals of my reign.

MARY.

This compunction would make me less

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vehement in the last, but not the least charge brought against you : for I must still urge, as before, that to give latitude to religious opinion, was true policy ; not to fear its flights and extravagancies, true magnanimity : you in this respect shewed no tokens of either.

ELIZABETH.

The charge may be just : but you should consider, that the point of toleration was in a manner new to the Christian world ; that they were unexperienced in the tendency of religious opinion ; that its effects had lately caused great convulsions in states ; and that there was reason to fear still greater from their continuance ; and that of consequence I was to be excused for applying corrosives to a disease, when it was not yet known that it might be cured by lenitives.

MARY.

The confession is ingenuous ; and therefore I shall only say on the whole, that your political abilities were very considerable ; and when they were deficient, it was chiefly
owing

owing to a woman's heart: if you would have a fresh proof of it from what has been already said, only reflect, that true courage is never cruel; yet for want of it you proved cruel, where you should especially have been merciful, to me, to your secretary, to yourself, and to your people.

ELIZABETH.

It is easy to find greater faults than these in the reign of any monarch as long as mine: let us turn only to your marriage with Bothwell in your own.

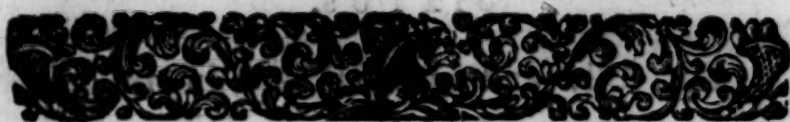
MARY.

No: I have already been tried and executed above: and it would be a fresh imputation upon your courage, to triumph over me again: let it suffice to observe, that on the two principles of magnanimity and policy, on which you say princes would chuse to be tried, you was more defective in the former, I in the latter:—You was more disguised and artificial, I was more open and natural:—You was more guarded and discreet, I was more exposed and inadvertent:

—You was more interested and selfish, I was more generous and benevolent :—You was more diffident and cruel, I was more confident and merciful : And for these differences, as it often happens, you lived and flourished in difficult times, while I fell a martyr to faction and revenge : But the storms and sun-shine of our respective lives are now over ; and though I have no reason on the whole to be satisfied with my own character, yet I should be still less so with that of Elizabeth.



DIA-



DIALOGUE XVII.

ADRIAN VI. and SIXTUS V.

SIXTUS.

WHO could ever have dreamed of such an epitaph as yours? “Here lies Adrian VI. who thought it the most unfortunate thing in his life to have been sovereign pontiff.” — Come, disown it; and let no such charge lie against any pope in the catalogue.

ADRIAN.

Would to God there was no greater against any of my fraternity! for you yourself, notwithstanding your vehemence, can scarce look upon it as criminal.

O 4 SIXTUS.

SIXTUS.

But folly and inconsistency, in my opinion, are equivalent to vice: What can a churchman mean; who, like you, has been used to courts, and is yet not fond of empire?

ADRIAN.

Nay, rather, what can a churchman mean, who, like you, was bred in dissingenuous life, and yet aspires to sovereign rule? But laying aside our particular situations, what is there in my epitaph that staggers you so much; and why cannot you conceive that I might look upon it as a misfortune to reign?

SIXTUS.

Because grandeur and pre-eminence, uncontrouled dominion, and worldly possessions, are, for the most part, the main ingredients in human felicity.

ADRIAN.

Supposing this to be true, have all a taste
for

for them alike? And might not I be so peculiarly constituted, as to be an exception to the general rule?

SIXTUS.

If you was, you can be no fit subject for me to contend with: I have nothing to say to men that have lost their feeling.

ADRIAN.

Well then; that I may not miss so fair an occasion of shewing you something that you seem not yet to have learned; it must be granted on my part, that dominion is happiness; and that I was as desirous of it, as my fellow creatures: Can you imagine no other reason for the sentiment on my tomb?

SIXTUS.

Probably you will allege, that there was something more than ordinarily turbulent during the short time of your administration.

ADRIAN.

ADRIAN.

No.

SIXTUS.

Or, that being of a grateful temper, and willing to favour your great patron Charles V. you could not do it without manifest danger to all Europe.

ADRIAN.

No.

SIXTUS.

Or that you was advanced in years, when you came to the chair, and being long used to a private life, could not bear the fatigue of a public one.

ADRIAN.

I knew beforehand, that you would look every where for the real cause, but where you should; and that if you was to enumerate a thousand causes, they would all be those of the politician, and none of the Christian.

SIXTUS.

SIXTUS.

What do you mean?

ADRIAN.

I knew likewise that you would ask that : and that this would be the first time that ever Sixtus was brought to consider, that Christianity was unfavourable to worldly grandeur ; that every sincere believer would necessarily be led to think himself unhappy in proportion as he was advanced ;—that every new accession of wealth and power was certainly the means of new temptation ; —and that, in all human appearance, the pope was as likely to make a worse man than the cardinal, as the cardinal than the prelate, and the prelate than the simple monk.

SIXTUS.

I do not see the force of this reasoning ; and I think I am a pregnant example of the contrary myself.

ADRIAN.

That is, because you could not possibly
be

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be a worse pope than you was a monk, a prelate, and a cardinal: But I desire no other conduct than yours to exemplify the truth of my charge: You cannot deny, that at least from the time of your commencing cardinal, if not a much earlier æra of ambition, you had a view to the popedom.

SIXTUS.

Indeed I cannot.

ADRIAN.

And since your low birth had deprived you of powerful connexions, and the ordinary means to accomplish your designs, you was forced to recur to new expedients, and uncommon inventions.

SIXTUS.

All this is in my favour.

ADRIAN.

Yes, as a politician, but not as a Christian: for what was all that shew of humility, that exterior of devotion, that mortified visage, that bended body, that counterfeited weak-

weakness, that pretended wearisomness of this life, and ardor after a better, designed for, but to persuade your brethren, that in electing you, they elected a pope of a day, who would immediately make room for another.

S I X T U S.

The expedient, as you observe, was new, and I had the pleasure to find, that the event answered exactly to the measures.

A D R I A N.

You had the heavenly pleasure too of being born again; but in a very different manner from that which your religion commands: Your age gradually diminished, and youth increased, in proportion as you advanced to the sovereign chair; your posture became erect, and your motions firm; your eyes began to sparkle with unusual vigour, and your voice to fulminate before its time:—In short, the renovation of age in the heathen accounts is fabulous and chimerical; that of Sixtus is literal and real; and Venus herself, in the raptures of poetry, did not bring on a more agreeable change in the person and visage of her favourite son,
than

than ambitious views in the form and gesture of the aspiring pontiff.

SIXTUS,

Continue, if possible, the lovely description; and let me longer enjoy that fortunate part of my life again.

ADRIAN,

Rather, let me apply it to the point in question; and you may observe from it, if you please, that if the very idea of empire at a distance can put one upon such irregular and scandalous devices, the possession of it would, in all probability, add others of a worse sort: Accordingly, we find you, as you approached the throne with artifice and fraud, you maintained yourself there with violence and revenge: You came to it void of Christian sincerity, and you sat upon it void of Christian moderation: in one word, you came to it an hypocrite, and sat upon it a tyrant.—Go now, and reflect with yourself, whether you may not some time find, that it may be a misfortune to reign.

F I N I S.